

Israel sends heavy water to Norway

OSLO (R) — Israel has sent Norway a shipment of heavy water, used to control nuclear reactors, to calm its fears that it may have helped Israel to develop nuclear weapons, officials said Tuesday. Norway said Israel 21 tonnes of heavy water in 1959 but has doubted Israel's assurances that it was used only for the peaceful purposes specified in the original contract. In a face-saving deal to end a long-running dispute, Israel said last year it would send Norway 10.5 tonnes of heavy water — equivalent to the amount left from the original shipment if Israel had used it for peaceful ends. "The heavy water arrived yesterday," said Erling Stenzen, supervisor at the Norwegian Nuclear Energy Safety Authority. "But this is completely different water from what Norway sold since that was used a long time ago." Oslo still does not know what Israel, widely believed to have nuclear arms, did with its original shipment. Norway paid 13.5 million crowns (\$2.13 million) to buy the non-toxic heavy water, which arrived on a ship along with a cargo of Israeli fruit. In 1986 Israel refused a Norwegian request to inspect its nuclear installations after reports that Norway's heavy water had been used to make plutonium for nuclear bombs. Norway then told Israel it had to return the shipment.

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Sununu resigns

WASHINGTON (R) — President George Bush's Chief of Staff John Sununu resigned on Tuesday, the White House said. The embattled, outspoken former New Hampshire governor, telling Mr. Bush that he had ceased to be a positive contributor to the administration, submitted a five-page handwritten resignation letter. A separate three-page letter from Mr. Bush accepted Mr. Sununu's resignation "with reluctance, regret and a sense of personal loss." The resignation, announced in Mississippi where Mr. Bush was travelling, is effective on Dec. 15.

Jordan-czech agreement signed

AMMAN (I.T.) — Jordan and Czechoslovakia Tuesday signed a programme for the implementation of a joint agreement on cooperation in cultural and scientific fields. The programme, signed by Dr. Safwan Toukan, secretary general of the Ministry of Planning, and Czechoslovak ambassador to Jordan Frantisek Dolizek, provides for cooperation in culture, arts, science, education, higher education, sports, youth, social development and television in the next two years.

Gonzalez talks peace, trade with Israelis

TEL AVIV (R) — Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, on the first visit by a Spanish head of government to the Jewish state, told Israeli leaders Monday he would work for a just Middle East peace. Mr. Gonzalez, who hosted historic Israeli-Arab peace talks in Madrid a month ago, said the needs of all sides in the conflict needed to be addressed. "This is a process that carries the weight of hope, of peace, and must guarantee security for Israel and the rights of the Palestinian people, the Arab people," he said. Mr. Gonzalez met Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir privately to discuss the peace process, Israel Radio said. Foreign Minister David Levy said he asked Mr. Gonzalez to help Israel to improve its trade with Europe. Trade between Spain and Israel was worth \$140 million this year, the radio said.

Iran executes 2

TEHRAN (R) — An Iranian military court is trying up to 300 people in a clampdown on crime and two men have already been executed for murder and corruption, a Tehran newspaper said Tuesday. Salam newspaper, quoting Tehran's military prosecutor Mohammad Niazi, said one of those executed was a member of the armed forces. He killed three colleagues and fled to a Gulf country after passing on military information to foreigners. He was extradited to stand trial. The report did not give his name, rank or date of execution.

Bhutto to face more charges

ISLAMABAD (R) — A senior Pakistani official said Tuesday he planned to bring further charges against opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, accusing her of masterminding what he described as terrorism. Sind Province Chief Minister Jam Sadiq Ali told Reuters his administration was preparing charges against Ms. Bhutto and her mother Nusrat. Mr. Ali is a former member of Ms. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP). He left last year when President Ghulam Ishaq Khan sacked Ms. Bhutto as prime minister after she had been in power for 20 months.

Honecker likely to be arrested if he travels to Chile

SANTIAGO, Chile (R) — The Chilean government said Monday that former East German communist leader Erich Honecker would probably be arrested and extradited if he travelled to Chile. Officials denied German press reports that negotiations were underway between the Soviet and Chilean governments to allow Mr. Honecker to spend Christmas with his daughter's family in Chile.

Peace negotiators await Israelis in Washington

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

ARAB PEACE negotiators gathered in Washington Tuesday for bilateral negotiations with Israel on resolving the decades-old Middle East conflict but faced the prospect of finding the Israeli chairs vacant at the table Wednesday, the date set by the sponsors of the peace process.

First to arrive in Washington for the talks was the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, which said the negotiators wanted to go straight into serious talks with Israel on substantive issues for a Middle East peace settlement.

The Syrian and Lebanese delegations were due to arrive later in the day. But Israel reaffirmed Tuesday it would be absent in Washington Wednesday and said its delegation would be present for the talks beginning Dec. 9.

Jordan's chief negotiator Abdul Salam Majali said the Kingdom's acceptance of the invitation to the Washington talks came in line with its belief and commitment to peace and that it would not waste any opportunity for a just, peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict.

"The joint delegation is here with hearts and eyes open to discuss essential and core issues (of the conflict) rather than wasting time on procedural matters," Dr. Majali said.

"When peace shows on the horizon, we jump at it," Dr. Majali told reporters upon arrival at Washington's Dulles airport.

Dr. Majali told a press conference Tuesday afternoon that the Arabs were in Washington to hold peace talks with Israel on the basis of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 — land for peace in return for recognition of Israel and its security.

"Israeli leaders have consistently said that they were willing to meet any Arab leader at any time at any place, but it seems that this is not the case this time," Dr. Majali said in a reference to Israel's possible absence at Wednesday's talks.

"In Madrid, we were ready and eager to continue the process which began with the opening of the peace conference, but the Israelis seem not to share this view and our genuine desire to take advantage of this opportunity and complete the process towards the final objective... of attaining just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East," he said.

"Again, we find ourselves waiting and looking forward to continuing the process, which began through the initiative of the two co-sponsors of this initiative, the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as the consent of

the Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese," he added. "Despite all this, we find that the other side is absent with no justification for its absence," he said.

"We are ready to negotiate peace. We will be there tomorrow, that is the fourth of December, with the objective of participating in direct and substantial bilateral talks with Israel if the Israeli delegation shows up," he added.

"If we find the Israeli chairs vacant, then they (Israel), not the Arabs, are to be blamed for the failure to achieve peace."

"We do not accept any delay in the peace process and we are tired of Israel's procrastination and its justifications for the delay. We really hope that Israel will put an end to all these practices and methods and to seriously seek

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Shamir: Israel not to attend Mideast peace talks this week

TEL AVIV (R) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Tuesday Israel will not show up for Middle East peace talks in Washington until next week, five days after the date set by the United States.

In an effort to limit the damage caused by Israel's absence on Wednesday, Mr. Shamir dispatched deputy minister and spokesman Benjamin Netanyahu to Washington for a major public relations exercise.

"We will come on the 9th of December," Mr. Shamir told reporters after a ceremony for a Jewish holiday.

The Jewish state has long said it is desperate for peace with the Arabs. Now it faces the embarrassing prospect they will appear opposite empty Israeli seats at a negotiating table.

The United States has announced arrangements for Wednesday's peace talks, which the Arab parties have agreed to attend, even though Israel will boycott the planned opening. Israel vowed to stay away to

show it did not agree with Washington dictating every detail of the peace process, begun with a ceremonial launch at an historic Madrid conference a month ago. "Well, the peace process will go on," Mr. Shamir replied, when asked whether talks would take place this week.

Israel wants the Washington talks to resume on Dec. 9, instead of Wednesday, and move after two rounds to a site nearer the Middle East.

Palestinians, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria say they will be in Washington on Dec. 4.

Mr. Netanyahu, who presented Israel's case to world cameras at the Madrid conference, is expected to lead a campaign to minimise the damage caused by the absence.

Israel Radio said Mr. Netanyahu would also meet U.S. officials, including Dennis Ross, a key adviser to Secretary of State James Baker. Mr. Netanyahu's office would not confirm this. Earlier this week, Israeli offi-

cials said the Jewish state might agree to Dec. 4 if the Bush administration met its clarifications regarding future talks.

Aside from moving to the region after two rounds, Israel wanted a timetable giving five-day gaps between each meeting to stress Israel is holding separate talks with each Arab group.

Mr. Shamir, angered by a U.S. refusal to reply, has questioned Washington's role as an honest broker. Late on Monday he warned Israel's closest ally that there was no substitute to direct bilateral negotiations with the Arabs.

"No international element who thinks it is able to dictate (to Israel) is a substitute for direct, free negotiations," he said at a dinner for Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez.

"As long as our Arab neighbours or even a few of our friends mistakenly think direct negotiations can be avoided, with even

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Arafat, Assad discuss peace talks

DAMASCUS (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad discussed Arab-Israeli peace talks Tuesday on the eve of the planned resumption of the Middle East peace process in Washington.

Presidential spokesman Jouban Kourieh told Reuters Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa were present at Mr. Arafat's meeting with Mr. Assad.

Arab delegations are due in Washington for Wednesday's talks, but Israel says its place at the peace table will be empty.

Mr. Arafat is on his third visit to Damascus since they patched up a longstanding quarrel in October when both agreed to support the U.S.-brokered talks. He earlier visited Cairo and Amman for talks with President Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein.

Israel refuses to deal with the PLO but the organisation directs from behind the scenes the West Bank and Gaza Strip members of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation.

Mr. Arafat told reporters on arrival in Damascus on Monday he would discuss issues related to the Washington talks "in which we will concentrate on U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 and the importance of halting Israel settlements in Arab lands."

A Palestinian official said in remarks published Tuesday that Palestinian negotiators will demand steps towards full autonomy in the occupied territories when the talks resume in Washington.

Nabil Shaath, adviser to Mr. Arafat, told Bahrain's daily Al Ayyam Palestinians wanted a complete transfer of power in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip and

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ROADS TURNED MUDDY STREAMS: Two people struggle through gushing water and mud as torrential rains turned Amman's streets into muddy streams (See page 3)
Photo by Yousef Al 'Allan

Anderson to follow Steen to freedom

BEIRUT (R) — Terry Anderson, the longest held hostage in Lebanon, will be freed Wednesday, a Muslim fundamentalist source said.

Word that his release was imminent came hours after another American, Alano Steen, was freed in Beirut on Tuesday following 1,773 days in captivity.

Freedom for Mr. Anderson after 2,454 days a prisoner would be virtually the final chapter in the seven-year hostage drama. If he follows Mr. Steen and Joseph Cicippio, another American released Monday, it will leave only two German aid workers in the hands of pro-Iranian kidnappers.

"Terry Anderson will be released tomorrow," said the source, who has proved correct in previous hostage releases.

Mr. Anderson, 44, chief Middle East correspondent for the Associated Press news agency, was kidnapped by the Islamic Jihad group in Beirut on March 16, 1985.

He was long regarded by his captors as their trump card in negotiations for a general swap of Middle East prisoners.

Mr. Steen, 52 and a captive almost five years, said after being driven to freedom in Damascus his captors told him Mr. Anderson would be free in a week.

Eight Western hostages and 91 Arabs held by Israel have walked free since Aug. 8 under a U.N.-brokered deal. Israel received the body of a serviceman and information about two of six others missing.

Mr. Steen emerged from captivity seemingly healthy but exhausted. His face looked as though it had just been scraped with a blunt razor. "It was my first shave in three years," he told reporters.

Assad — people's choice by over 99%

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria said Tuesday more than 99 per cent of voters endorsed a fourth seven-year term for President Hafez Al Assad in a yes-or-no ballot. Mr. Assad, 61, who seized power in a 1970 coup, was the only candidate in Monday's poll. The 99.982 per cent approval was announced by Interior Minister Mohammad Harba. Mr. Harba said 6,727,992 of Syria's 6,786,193 registered voters took part in the ballot, which followed days of pre-Assad demonstrations throughout the country. He said 396 voted "No," and 6,726,843 voted "Yes." There were 753 invalid ballots. Mr. Harba extended voting by three hours on Monday evening because of the heavy turnout. The outcome was never in doubt since Mr. Assad was nominated as the only candidate on Nov. 17.

Regional talks in Moscow on Jan. 28

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States and the Soviet Union said Tuesday they will hold a foreign ministers' conference in Moscow on Jan. 28 and 29 to discuss regional Middle East issues.

The conference would be open to parties in and beyond the Middle East to discuss issues like sharing water resources, economic development, arms control, refugees and the environment. Some 35 countries are expected to be represented.

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said the announcement of the conference was being made simultaneously in Washington and Moscow.

The State Department also said Tuesday that Arab-Israeli peace talks in Washington would be held at three sites within a single complex of government buildings.

The decision was a compromise between the Israeli demand for separate sites and the Syrian demand for the talks to be held at the same place.

The separate sets of talks involve Israel and Syria, Lebanon and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Israel says it will boycott the opening session set for Wednesday and send its representatives only next Monday.

The United States appears to take the steps to ease tension in U.S.-Israeli relations on the eve of the peace talks whose opening Israel intends to boycott, announcing the venue and date for the regional talks and vowing to seek fast repeal of a U.N. resolution on Zionism.

Israel has long sought talks on regional issues to demonstrate its growing acceptance by the Arab world.

Syria has said it would not come because it is not prepared to discuss such issues until Israel begins withdrawing from occupied Arab lands.

The United States hopes the regional conference will give a push to the actual Middle East peace negotiations. Those now seemed likely to resume in Washington next Monday when Israeli negotiators show up.

Israel, angered by the way in which Washington issued invitations for Dec. 4, said it would not send representatives until Dec. 9.

Spokeswoman Tutwiler tried to deflect some of the public relations damage Israel feared it would suffer by announcing that the press would not be allowed to film or photograph empty Israeli chairs at the three negotiating sites Washington was opening on Wednesday.

"That is below the belt," she said. A third U.S. announcement likely to please Israel was a pledge to press for repeal by Dec. 17 of a 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution defining Zionism as a form of racism.

"By repealing this resolution unconditionally, the United Nations will enhance its credibility and serve the cause of peace," Ms. Tutwiler said.

President George Bush called in a radio interview on Tuesday.

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Despite absence in cabinet, Brotherhood remains an organised political force

This is the fourth in a series of articles analysing Jordan's democratic experiment, with special emphasis on the experience of the government of Prime Minister Taher Masi, who resigned two weeks ago. The fifth part will also deal with the politics of the Muslim Brotherhood.

DESPITE THE stunning victory of the Muslim Brotherhood — the only organised political group in Jordan — in the general parliamentary elections in November 1989, the democratisation process was viewed as the beginning of a pluralist era signalling the end of "monopoly of one group" over the popular political movement in the country.

Two years later the experiment with democracy has paved the way for the other trends to surface but the

Brotherhood (Al Ikhwan) remains the unchallenged, most influential and organised movement in the Kingdom.

However, the Ikhwan, according to analysts, has realised that there are limits to its ability to push for a fundamental "Islamisation of the system" or to assert its monopoly on the domestic political equation.

At the same time, conservative governments and the Brotherhood's political rivals have realised that the Ikhwan is an extremely important

factor that cannot be ignored or easily marginalised, analysts maintain.

In fact, some analysts argue the success, and perhaps the continuity, of the democratisation process heavily depended on the Brotherhood's readiness to practically accept pluralism, and the government's and the other groups' ability to prove that no movement will be excluded from the democratic game.

In other words, while the Brotherhood cannot use its alliance with any government to deny political freedoms to its rivals, others — mainly the liberals, leftists and pan-Arab nationalists — can afford to

undercut the Ikhwan by supporting the suppression of the movement.

The experience of former prime ministers Mudar Badran and Taher Masi were very revealing in terms of the limitations and factors that shape the Brotherhood's role. The experience of the Badran government, which relied on Brotherhood support, clearly indicated that the Ikhwan cannot — and the system will not allow it — to impose a fundamentally conservative change in the lifestyle of Jordanians or alter the country's commitment towards peace.

The experience of the Masi government was an attempt

to show the Brotherhood that a Jordanian government is no longer dependent on "a tacit formal alliance" with the Brotherhood.

Initially, a tradeoff between the Badran government and the Ikhwan appeared possible. According to former ministers, the Badran government had agreed that programmes presented on television and radio should be consistent with the conservative educational policies of the Brotherhood's members in the cabinet.

The Brotherhood, according to Ikhwan officials, secured pledges from the government "that not one iota of

the occupied Arab territories will be compromised."

The latter was then relatively easy since the peace process had not started yet. However, the Badran government tried in return to make up for "social conservatism" by a "liberal political" information policy. The result was a conservative censorship of television entertainment programmes accompanied with unprecedented access to all trends of the opposition to television and radio through political debates.

But "this equation" could not continue and was disrupted by two elements, in the view of analysts. First,

the Muslim Brotherhood's ministers waged a wide and systematic campaign to apply strict Islamic codes on the country's educational system and on Jordanians' "modern" lifestyle.

Secondly, as it became clear that Arab-Israeli peace talks were a strong possibility, it was increasingly difficult for the Ikhwan to justify their participation in the cabinet.

The Ikhwan, however, did not opt to pull out their five ministers from Mr. Badran's cabinet despite the unambiguous official Jordanian acceptance of the principle of

(Continued on page 5)

U.N. proposes Israel hand over some positions in S. Lebanon

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said Monday he had proposed that U.N. soldiers replace Israeli troops and Israeli-backed Lebanese militia at sensitive locations in southern Lebanon to avoid future incidents in the area.

He did not say how many locations were involved or whether any response had yet been received from Israel, which has maintained a so-called "security zone" in southern Lebanon since 1985.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar referred to his proposal in a written report to the Security Council giving details of an incident on Nov. 15 in which an Israeli member of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was killed in a clash with the Israeli-supported South Lebanese Army (SLA), referred to by the United Nations as de facto forces (DFF).

The secretary-general said there had been an increase in recent months of attacks by what the United Nations calls "armed elements" — members of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) and various other groups — against Israel Defence Force (IDF) and DFF personnel, as well as retaliatory action by the latter.

The attacks have sometimes involved the detonation of roadside bombs while the retaliation has frequently taken the form of artillery and tank fire into and around population centres close

to where the bombs were detonated.

"Most of the above-described hostilities have taken place near IDF/DFF positions that are close to population centres and in areas where UNIFIL's deployment overlaps the Israeli-controlled Area (ICA)," the secretary-general wrote.

"In order to reduce hostilities, to avoid further hardship to the civilian population and to prevent additional UNIFIL casualties, I have proposed to the government of Israel that it withdraw IDF/DFF personnel from the most affected positions, which would then be taken over by UNIFIL."

Referring to one location where such an arrangement was implemented four years ago, Mr. Perez de Cuellar added: "I am convinced that, as in the case of Tallet Haqban in October 1987 ... such a move would have a beneficial effect."

In his account of the killing of the Irish U.N. soldier, he said it occurred when a five-man UNIFIL patrol entered the village of At Tiri.

When the UNIFIL patrol was returning to its position three of its members came under rifle and machinegun fire. The first burst killed a corporal and wounded a private soldier.

Immediately afterwards, two DFF positions in the vicinity fired thousands of machinegun rounds to the area.

After news of the incident reached the Irish battalion head-

quarters, two fully illuminated armoured personnel carriers with flashing beacons tried to reach the scene but were prevented by sustained machinegun fire from DFF positions.

As the two survivors, including the wounded man, were taken away by the DFF in an armoured personnel carrier, they were shown the body of a DFF soldier who was alleged to have been killed during the incident.

After intervention by U.N. military observers, the two soldiers were handed over to UNIFIL. Later, the Irish battalion was able to recover the body of the dead corporal as well as the two members of the UNIFIL patrol who were separated from their comrades when the firing began.

The fatal casualty was the 101st suffered by UNIFIL as a result of hostile action or duty-related accidents, and the 21st suffered by the Irish contingent.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar said the incident had been strongly protested to the Israeli authorities both locally and in New York. UNIFIL was conducting a full investigation but had already established that no weapons were fired by any of the members of the UNIFIL patrol and that the United Nations was not therefore responsible for the death of the DFF soldier.

UNIFIL had also requested the Israeli authorities to inform it of the results of their own investigation, the report added.

U.N. to issue Iraq claim forms, urges patience

GENEVA (R) — The United Nations said Monday individuals would soon be able to claim compensation from Iraq for Gulf war losses and anguish but warned people not to expect too much too soon.

Carlos Alzamora, executive secretary of the U.N. compensation fund, told a news conference it would be sending out compensation forms in early January for claims of up to \$100,000 per person from a special fund.

He warned, however, that successful claimants could not expect to receive payment in full in the near future, but would probably be paid in instalments.

The biggest problem is that the fund has no money.

Baghdad objects to a U.N. resolution authorising it to sell \$1.6 billion worth of oil to help raise money for the fund as an intrusion into its internal affairs, and has refused to put any on the open market.

"This is going to be a long process," Mr. Alzamora said. "We will be depending on many circumstances to get the fund funded, and therefore it will be very dangerous to fuel immediate expectations among a great mass of people."

The fund's governing council, comprising the 15 members of the U.N. Security Council, has ruled that anyone forced to leave Kuwait or Iraq during the war is entitled to a sum of up to \$4,000.

Those with proof of further losses can submit formal claims under other categories.

The council, which met in Geneva late last month, also decided to permit claims for mental pain and anguish for such traumas as being raped or being held hostage, though it has yet to decide ceilings for such claims.

Council Chairman Philippe Berg of Belgium estimated that between one-and-a-half and two million people could make claims likely to total many billions of dollars.

The fund's secretariat will send master copies of the forms to governments, which will then have to distribute copies to their citizens, educate them and collect the forms. The governments will have 18 months to return the forms to Geneva.

The council authorised the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, which works among Palestinians, to collect the forms on behalf of Palestinians who do not have a government to represent them.

The council intends to give priority to smaller claims before dealing with individual submissions for more than \$100,000 and claims from businesses, governments and international organisations.

U.S. Ambassador Morris Abram urged Iraq on Monday to begin oil sales as permitted by the United Nations.

"We are aware of the claims of the humanitarian need of segments of Iraq's population. But... no United Nations sanction bars imports of food and medicine," he said.

Secrecy shrouds Baghdad talks on Kurdish self-rule

BAGHDAD (R) — Secrecy shrouds talks on self-rule for Iraq's restive Kurdish north, nine months after rebels rose against the government.

The Kurdish unrest, in the aftermath of the Gulf war, was crushed by tank-led forces, sending up to two million refugees over the mountainous borders of Turkey and Iran. Western troops created "safe havens" for their return.

A stalemate persists in the oil-producing northern region between Baghdad's troops and Kurdish Peshmarga (soldiers of death).

The Iraqi government remained silent Tuesday about current talks with Kurdish rebel leader Massoud Barzani and slow-paced progress towards a new regional autonomy pact.

Government officials declined to give details, beyond saying that Mr. Barzani, head of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), had met President Saddam Hussein and his close adviser Saturday.

No mention of further talks was made in Iraq's official media. Mr. Barzani was believed to be staying in a government guest house in a Baghdad suburb.

Mr. Barzani, co-leader of the umbrella Kurdistan Front, arrived in the Iraqi capital last week following reports of sporadic clashes and fresh tension between the army and guerrillas.

Kurdish spokesmen in London and Baghdad said he would discuss an economic blockade the Kurds accuse Iraq of clamping on their region to prod the leadership into signing a self-rule agreement under discussion since May.

The "Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan," a clandestine opposition radio, said Monday that the visit was necessary because of "deteriorating circumstances" in Kurdistan.

People were weary of a long dialogue that kept them in a state of expectation, the radio said of the autonomy talks.

"We hope Barzani's visit will inaugurate a new stage of seriousness and persistent work that is characterised by confidence and sincerity to build what should be built, repair what should be repaired and rectify what needs rectification," it said Monday.

Diplomats said the secrecy surrounding Mr. Barzani's talks was relatively normal in line with previous discussions.

Mr. Barzani's co-leader in the front, Jalal Talabani, is known to oppose terms agreed so far, especially the exclusion from a new autonomous region of the oil towns of Kirkuk.

But diplomats said a government announcement last week that anyone could buy land around Kirkuk, which was previously reserved for people of Arab origin, was a concession to the Kurds which might help towards a new autonomy accord.

Hundreds of thousands of Kurds fled Iraq when their rebellion at the end of the Gulf war was crushed and are still trickling back in the hope that the United Nations agencies in the region will give them food and shelter to endure the coming winter.

The Peshmarga control all key towns in Kurdistan except Kirkuk but accused the Iraqi army last month of moving 18,000 troops into the region with artillery and tanks in what they feared was a new offensive.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

French officer suspended over Lebanese list

PARIS (R) — A French police officer who gave Lebanese authorities a list of protesters against a visit by President Elias Hrawi has been suspended from his post, a spokesman for the ruling Socialist Party said Tuesday. The sergeant from a Paris district, who was not identified, admitted passing the list of 85 dissidents to a security agent at the Lebanese embassy who was a friend, officials said. "For the moment he has been suspended. Disciplinary authorities will deal with the situation later," Socialist spokesman Jean-Jack Queyranne said. Police acknowledged on Saturday the list was given to Beirut illegally. The list named 67 Lebanese, 12 French and six North Africans detained for identity checks on Oct. 21 during a demonstration against the visit by Mr. Hrawi. The demonstration was organised by Lebanese groups that support deposed Christian leader General Michel Aoun, who accuses Mr. Hrawi of collaborating with Syria. Gen. Aoun lives in exile in France. A spokesman for pro-Aoun groups said they obtained a copy of a Lebanese security police order saying the Lebanese listed should be arrested if they tried to return to Lebanon and the foreigners should be barred from entering. Jean-Francois Deniau, opposition vice-chairman of parliament's foreign affairs committee, questioned whether the police officer had acted alone or on government orders. "The question remains whether a police sergeant could have done that on his own initiative without political backing," he told France-Info radio.

Pathologist: No surprises from Maxwell autopsy

LAS PALMAS, Canary Islands (R) — A final official ruling on the death of British media tycoon Robert Maxwell will contain no surprises, the chief pathologist conducting the autopsy said Monday. "I'm not expecting anything new, no surprises," Carlos Lopez de Lamela told Reuters by telephone after spending the weekend studying results of forensic tests carried out at a Madrid institute. He said he received the results late on Friday. "I am now incorporating them into the report I am working on," he said. Mr. Lopez de Lamela said he hoped to have his scientific report ready for investigating Judge Isabel Oliva in Tenerife on Wednesday. She will then decide whether to close the case. He will first present it to Judge Luis Gutierrez in Las Palmas, where a preliminary autopsy was performed. Mr. Maxwell was found floating naked off the Canary Islands almost a month ago after falling from his yacht, the Lady Ghislaine. The initial autopsy found he had died of natural causes, possibly from a heart attack. Mr. Lopez de Lamela told Reuters last week he could not say for sure it was a natural death until tests were completed, but he rejected a theory that Mr. Maxwell had been injected with poison.

U.S. soldier in Germany jailed for 34 years

BONN (R) — A U.S. soldier in Germany has been convicted of spying for Iraq and Jordan during the Gulf war and sentenced to 34 years in prison, the U.S. army said Tuesday. Specialist Albert Sombolay passed deployment data about U.S.-led allied forces during the Gulf crisis, samples of chemical weapons protection equipment and identification documents to a foreign intelligence officer, the army said from its European headquarters in Heidelberg. Mr. Sombolay, of the eighth infantry division and based in Baumholder near the western town of Kaiserslautern, offered to photograph his unit's activities in Saudi Arabia and received about \$1,300 for his work, a statement said. He was convicted in July but the information had not been released previously pending the end of follow-up investigative actions, the statement said. Mr. Sombolay was now serving his sentence in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, an army spokeswoman said.

Iran's parliament speaker to visit China

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's parliamentary speaker will pay an official five-day visit to China from Dec. 16, the Iranian news agency IRNA said Tuesday. Mehdi Karubi will hold talks with Chinese President Yang Shangkun and other senior officials and tour several cities in southern China, IRNA added. Mr. Yang visited Tehran at the end of October just after U.S. officials charged that China was helping Iran build nuclear weapons. Both Tehran and Peking denied the allegation. Iran has close relations with China which supplied it with weapons during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. IRNA said Mr. Karubi would visit Yemen on his way home.

Iran's population 57.8 million

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's population stands at 57,799,204 and is growing at 3.17 per cent a year, according to a September census. Tehran Radio Monday quoted the head of plan and budget organisation, Massoud Rughani Zanjani, as saying 56.5 per cent of the population lived in cities, 42.9 per cent in villages and 0.6 per cent had no fixed abode. The results show a slight decline in the population growth rate, one of the biggest worries of the Iranian government which is struggling to reverse years of economic decline. But the total count falls well short of 59.5 million estimated in September by the head of Iran's statistics centre, Abolghasem Jamshidi. There was no immediate explanation. The last census five years ago found the population growth rate to be 3.2 per cent, prompting the government to start birth control programmes. Iran aims to lower the growth rate to 2.9 per cent by the end of five-year economic plan in March 1994.

'Iran able to make nuclear arms by 2000'

BONN (R) — Iran may be able to build nuclear weapons by the year 2000, the head of Germany's foreign intelligence agency BND said in an interview published on Monday. BND chief Konrad Forzner told Die Welt newspaper that Iran was keeping open the option of launching a programme to make uranium and plutonium bombs. "There is at present no proof of production, but Iran will be capable of building nuclear weapons by 2000 if its armament activities continue as they are doing," he said. Mr. Forzner said that if present trends continued, many countries would have nuclear, biological and chemical weapons in less than 10 years. He said that Iran may have got hold of the plans for a chemical weapons plant at Rabta in Libya and was apparently buying parts that would enable it to build a similar one.

Conflicting approaches to peace process and PLO split Jordanian coalition

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — While the debate over the pros and cons of the American-led Middle East peace conference appears to have subsided in recent days pending the outcome of this week's Washington talks, a political coalition of five Jordanian parties has been split over conflicting approaches to the peace process.

The main bone of contention in the ranks of the National Action Front, a six-month-old pan-Arab nationalist movement grouping Baathists, socialists, Arab nationalists and independents, is whether the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) had the right to make the choice to attend the peace process.

The Unionist Democrats, a group which was formed in the early 1980s in Jordan headed by Jamal Al Shaer, has quit the National Action Front, but other coalition members are staying together saying they are trying to mend fences with the Union Democrats.

In order to do that, the five parties in the National Action Front along with its independent members set up a preparatory committee that comprised of 20 representatives from the five parties as well as 20 independent members in the front.

Members of the committee engaged in heated debates over the ideology and principles that guided the front, but reached a deadlock. Members of the committee decided to issue a statement signed by members of the five parties reaffirming their rejectionist policy and urging the Unionist Democrats to rejoin the mainstream trend in the front.

The committee then gave the unionists a deadline to either join the front or withdraw. The deadline expired when the Unionists issued a statement of their own declaring their withdrawal from the ranks of the front.

Dr. Shaer said that the action taken by his party was a result of its belief that the other parties had steered away from the mainstream nationalist trend by adopting this rejectionist policy with Israel.

Dr. Shaer said that since its establishment, the Unionist Democratic Party has reaffirmed its commitment to the Palestinian cause, and has given its full-fledged support the PLO.

"Right from the beginning we have taken a nationalist stand by supporting the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people," Dr. Shaer said. Since the PLO has decided to support the peace talks and to join the

ongoing efforts, we have decided to adopt the same position."

"Dr. Shaer said that this was the point of dispute among Arab nationalists. "There are those who believe that the PLO should not be supported unconditionally and its strategy should be revised before any support or opposition or even authorisation be given to the organisation," Dr. Shaer said.

Saleem Sweiss, a prominent lawyer and columnist and an independent member of the front, said that the front — like the Unionists — does not question the legality of the PLO, but questions its actions when dealing with the Palestinian problem.

"The front has openly declared that it is not supporting the PLO in any action or behaviour that entails compromising any inch of the Palestinian land," Mr. Sweiss said. "The fact that the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people should not mean that it can have a free hand in the Palestinian issue because this issue is of national concern and not only of Palestinian concern."

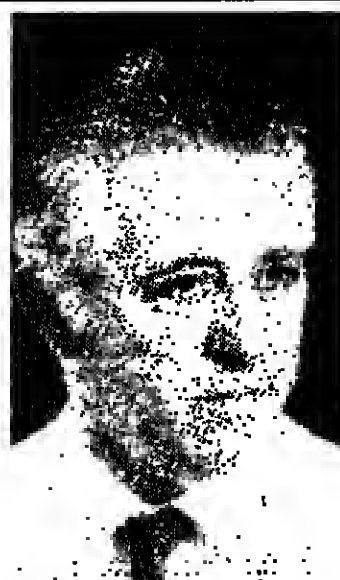
Mr. Sweiss also said that the front's charter has always adopted this stand, and the Unionist Democrats had agreed on these principles right from the beginning when its members decided to join the four other parties forming the National Action Front.

"The front was surprised to receive a letter from the Unionist Democrats to the effect that the Unionists felt they could not continue to be members of the front," Mr. Sweiss said. "This is really regrettable as the front did not expect this to happen especially that the withdrawal came as a result of difference in views at a time when the front is trying to expand its base to include the largest possible national gathering to end the current disarray in the Jordanian national ranks."

Mr. Sweiss also said that the rejectionist policy of the front also entails the liberation of all occupied Arab lands, not only lands occupied by the Jewish state.

"When we say all occupied Arab lands we mean the lands occupied by Turkey like the Alexandrette governorate, Diyarbakir, Al Ruba and Thar Abdeen, as well as lands occupied by Iran like Ahwaz, Mohammara Emirate and the three isles in the Gulf of Oman," Mr. Sweiss said. "We have also rejected the existence of the state of Israel and refused any settlement that would not guarantee the return of all Palestinian land to their rightful owners."

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Jamal Al Shaer

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Mr. Sweiss said that the

front's policy is born out of a belief that a political settlement under current circumstances is not in the Arabs' interest.

"There are many circumstances that prompted the front to reject the current negotiations, such as American hegemony, America's dirty war against Iraq, the continuing embargo against that country, intimidating weak Arab regimes by threatening them with a fate similar to that which met Iraq, and destroying Iraq's military capability, leaving Israel the strongest power in the region," Mr. Sweiss said.

Dr. Shaer also highlighted another point of contention between his party and the front. He accused the front of abandoning its ideology by adopting a mixture of socialist and Islamic ideologies.

"Members of the front now say that socialism is part of the nationalist movement, and Islam is the future of the nation and by doing that they have rejected all that Arab nationalists believe in," Dr. Shaer said.

He added that he did not reject the principles of socialism or Islam, but said that nationalism should only acquire some of those principles in order to keep a safe distance from political parties that have rigid social or Islamic ideologies.

"In the amended charter of the front they replaced the word 'parliamentary democracy' with the Islamic term 'shura', and they adopted a Marxist ideology instead of adopting an ideology that encourages holding on to a Middle Eastern identity, and the belief in one Arab Nation," Dr. Shaer said.

"We did not discuss these matters in the front, and the Unionists never objected or referred to these points before," Mr. Sweiss said. "Shura is the Arabic translation of the word democracy and is not related to the Brotherhood's interpretation of the word."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Le Mond est a Vous
18:30 News in French
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:30 News in Arabic
21:00 Kato and alia
21:30 News in English
22:30 Equal Justice

PRAYER TIMES

04:53 Fajr
06:15 (Shams) Duha
11:25 Duha
14:13 Asr
16:26 Maghreb
17:58 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 622785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel.

CHURCHES

627440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625411
Assumption Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 625433
Assumption Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Assumption Orthodox Church Tel. 772561
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assumption International Church Tel. 683325
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811255
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 622624, 624922
Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will continue to be cold, cloudy and rainy and winds will southerly from the west. In Amman, it will be partly cloudy with chance for scattered showers of rain, while winds will be southerly from the west and sea calm.
Mtn. Junc. temp. 6/10
Amman 17/22

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Abdul Qader Al Lala 690448
Dr. Ghaleb Zaidat 736123
Dr. Riaz Abu Zaid 894285
Dr. Youssef Al Faghi 697009
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asmaa pharmacy 670255
Nairosch pharmacy 625872
Al Salem pharmacy 636730
Yaacob pharmacy 644945
Shamsch pharmacy 637660

REPAIRS:
Dr. Abdul Majed Salabin (—)
Al Shams pharmacy (738225)
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad (—)

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630541
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Police 89402
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 661111
Central Amman Telephone 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/372
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 642481/6
Jabal Marj Maternity 642362
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsch 641714
Shamsch Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Munasser Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 661273/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali 661646
Italian, Al-Munasser 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf 775112/6
Palestine, Shamsch 661715
Queen Alia Hospital 622405/0
Amal Hospital 674153
ZARQA:
Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)83323
Zarga National Hospital (09)90020
Rn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikm Modern Hospital (09)99990
REHAB:
Pleasant Bama Hospital (02)25555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)72275

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)52200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:00 Damascus (RU)
08:30 Jeddah (RU)
09:30 Dhahran (RU)
09:30 Riyadh (RU)
09:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RU)
12:00 Calcutta, Bangalore (RU)
12:00 Sanaa (RU)
14:30 Istanbul (RU)
17:00 New York, Amsterdam (RU)
18:00 Madrid, Rome (RU)
18:00 Paris, Geneva (RU)

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12:00 Calcutta, Bangalore (RU)
12:00 Sanaa (RU)
14:30 Istanbul (RU)
17:00 New York, Amsterdam (RU)
18:00 Madrid, Rome (RU)
18:00 Paris, Geneva (RU)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:30 Cairo (MS)
12:00 Sanaa (TY)
14:00 Baghdad (LN)
22:30 Karachi (PK)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
11:10 Tunis, Comblance (TU)
11:10 Istanbul (RU)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RU)
11:45 London (RU)
19:15 Athens (RU)
19:30 Colombo (RU)
19:45 Cairo (RU)
20:10 Dhahran (RU)
20:10 Riyadh (RU)
22:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RU)
22:45 Calcutta, Bangalore (RU)
22:45 Sanaa (RU)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
08:15 Beirut (ME)

MARKET PRICES

Up/down price in Jds per kg.
Apples 500/500
Bananas 500/500
Bananas (Mukammara) 500/500
Beans 180/120
Cabbages 280/280
Cauliflowers 100/120
Cucumbers (large) 100/120
Cucumbers (small) 100/120
Eggplants 280/280
Garlic 800/700
Lemons 500/400
Marrows (large) 100/120
Marrows (small) 100/120
Onions 800/700
Peas 100/120
Peppers (red) 100/120
Peppers (green) 100/120
Potatoes 300/200
Spinach 600/500
Sweet melon 220/180
Tomatoes 420/300
Watermelon 180/120

Journalists' association commends peace efforts

AMMAN (Petra) — The International Organisation of Journalists (IOJ) has recently issued a statement voicing support for the peaceful efforts currently being made to reach a just and durable solution to the Palestine problem in accordance with United Nations resolutions and international legitimacy.

President of the Jordan Press Association Hashem Khreisat, who attended the IOJ meetings held in Sanaa, Yemen, said the IOJ council had stressed the importance of halting the construction of settlements in the occupied Arab territories and resuming work at the international level to stop oppressive Israeli measures against the Palestinian people, including journalists.

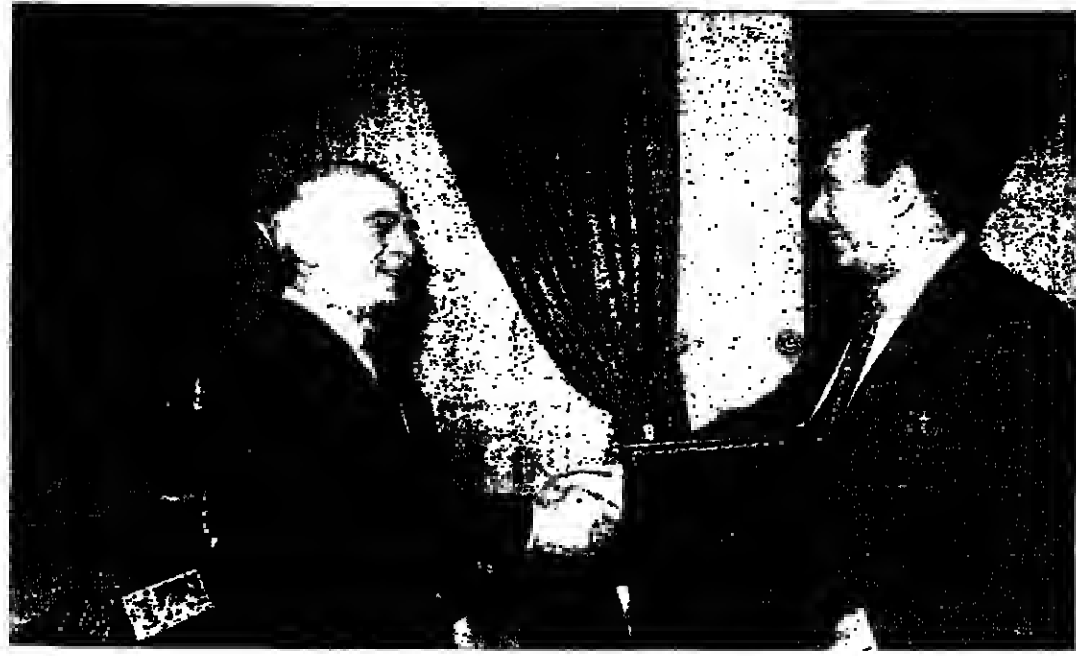
In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, following his arrival from Sanaa, Mr. Khreisat said the council decided to launch an appeal to the United Nations to lift the economic embargo on Iraq because it deprives the Iraqi children of food and medicine.

Such a ban contravenes international principles and charters, he said.

The council also supported Libya's right to resort to the International Court of Justice in La Haye (The Hague) or to demand the formation of a neutral international panel to investigate the accusations levelled against Libya for bombing of a Pan Am plane.

The council approved the plan of action for next year and decided to set up a regional centre for the IOJ in Sanaa.

The IOJ held its meeting in Sanaa.



Abdel Majid Saeed Awad, Operation Smile International coordinator in the Middle East, is congratulated by His Majesty King Hussein.

King awards medals to medical service organisation officers

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein received at the Royal Court Tuesday three members of Operation Smile International (OSI), a private non-profit volunteer medical services organisation providing reconstructive surgery for needy children of the world.

The team, comprising Dr. William Magee, the organisation's president, David Clifford, coordinator for OSI in the Middle East region, and Abdel Majid Saeed Awad, OSI representative in Jordan.

The team briefed King Hussein on the organisation's operations and activities in various parts of the world and discussed plastic

surgery needs of Jordan and Palestine.

Dr. Magee was quoted as saying that OSI, which has a centre in Jerusalem, plans to open a centre for its services in Jordan. Dr. Magee received from the King the Jordanian Al Kawkah Medal of the Second Order and Mr. Clifford received the Jordanian Al Kawkah Medal of the Third Order. Mr. Awad received the Independence Medal of the First Order.

Present at the meeting were Chief of the Royal Court Adnan Abu Odeh, Director of the Royal Medical Services Dr. Yousef Qasous, the King's private physician as well as the director of the

Farah Heart Centre.

Operation Smile International offers treatment to children with deformities and education and training to physicians and other health care profession in mission countries.

OSI was founded in 1982 by Dr. Magee and his wife, a nurse and social worker. During the past nine years, over 5,000 children have received surgery for disfigurements such as cleft lip and palate, burn scars and contractures and club feet.

To date, over 12,000 volunteers from 75 cities and 11 countries have contributed their time, talent and money to OSI.

Germany to help Jordan in talks with World Bank, official says

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A German minister said his government will "assist" Jordan in a "constructive" way with regard to talks the Jordanians are scheduled to hold with World Bank officials to secure financial resources needed to cover the balance of payment deficit.

"We gave Dr. (Ziad) Fariz (minister of planning) assurances that Germany would assist the Kingdom in a constructive way with regard to hopefully successful negotiations in Washington, which will be a precondition to the rescheduling meeting of the Paris Club," said Winfried Fuchs, the director for the Mediterranean Region, Northern Africa and the Middle East at the Ministry for Economic Cooperation. Mr. Fuchs is currently on a three-day visit to the Kingdom.

Dr. Fariz, who held talks with the German visitor, left for Washington Monday to seek World Bank assistance to support the Kingdom's current needs in implementing economic and developmental programmes.

The visit of the five member German economic team headed by Mr. Fuchs is the first visit by a donor delegation after the formation of the new Jordanian government.

"This visit has been done in view of the actual discussions that are currently occurring in the International Monetary Fund in the World Bank to arrive at a different level in the structural advancement programme," Mr. Fuchs said.

He explained that the structural advancement programme and the Paris Club meetings would precede the consultative group meeting.

"The German side on this occasion has underlined the need for coordination for all

bilateral and multilateral efforts to support Jordan at this difficult time," Mr. Fuchs said.

Mr. Fuchs, who met with a number of Jordanian officials including Minister of Finance Basil Jarrah, said that the delegation's visit concentrated on a range of issues including political, economic and developmental problems.

"We discussed a number of issues concentrating on political ones, but also on issues concerning development progress underlying sectors of priority like water and irrigation, and linked to it agricultural development programmes," Mr. Fuchs said.

Jordan, the biggest recipient of German aid per capita, has so far received 400 million Deutschmarks (DM) since the onset of the Gulf crisis in August 1990.

"Germany has given to Jordan as the result of severe losses following the Gulf crisis

special contributions in the form of untied grants which included 180 million DM last year, 20 million DM to help Jordan deal with the refugees and 150 million DM in June of this year," Mr. Fuchs said.

Untied grants allow the recipient country to use the money as it wishes and do not impose on that country conditions for acceptance of the grant.

In the field of financial bilateral negotiations, Mr. Fuchs said that a 30 million DM structural adjustment soft loan was given in the field of agriculture.

"In the field of technical assistance, a 50 million DM grant was given to concentrate on ongoing projects under the lead of different ministries such as the planning, health, water and irrigation, trade and industry ministries," Mr. Fuchs said.

The German delegation will head to Yemen after spending three days in Jordan.

Lack of agricultural policy hinders development, minister says

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan's agricultural policy came under scrutiny Tuesday at a symposium organised by the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The symposium, which lasts four days, is expected to review

studies and working papers on the country's agricultural resources, developing the agricultural sector, marketing of agricultural products, pricing policies and a general agricultural development strategy.

Agriculture Minister Fayez Khasawneh opened the sessions with an address in which he admitted that Jordan has no definite agricultural policy.

The lack of such policy has been the cause of all the problems encountered by the agricultural sector despite past seminars designed to help boost production, the minister said.

Dr. Khasawneh said that the country is especially in need of an agricultural strategy at this crucial time, with numerous economic and political changes which directly affect the Kingdom's agricultural production, pricing of crops and marketing operations.

The recent events in the region and the Gulf crisis have had an adverse impact on Jordan's pro-



Fayez Khasawneh

duction and marketing of its produce, the minister added. One of the other negative factors, the minister said, is Jordan's poor and limited agricultural lands, which do not exceed 2.5 million dunums. Only 600,000 dunums are cultivated through irrigation, he said.

Jordan is also suffering from severe water shortages. For this

reason, only 550 cubic metres of water were allocated for irrigation in 1990, he said. The country does not expect big increases in irrigation water allocations over the coming 20 years, he added.

FAO representative Dr. Dia Abdo said Jordan is in dire need of an agricultural policy, particularly as agricultural production constitutes one of the main pillars of the national economy.

Dr. Abdo expressed satisfaction over the existing level of cooperation between FAO and Jordan and hoped such cooperation would continue.

Dr. Walid Abed Rabbo, chairman of a preparatory committee for the symposium, called on the Ministry of Agriculture to revise its traditional role and embark on measures that would help Jordan cope with the internal and external challenges it is facing.

FAO experts and Ministry of Agriculture engineers are taking part in the symposium held at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman.

Agriculture Ministry to continue spraying campaigns

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Agriculture's Department for the Protection of Crops will buy 12 machines in 1992 to be used for spraying pesticides to protect crops from pests and insects, according to department Director Hani Haddadin.

The department plans to carry out wide-scale spraying campaigns in the upcoming agricultural season to eliminate the white fly and other pests that have been causing damage to crops, said Dr. Haddadin in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The white fly was reported to have caused widespread damage to crops in the past agricultural season and some experts estimated the loss at JD 60 million.

Dr. Haddadin said that plans are being carefully laid to ensure people's safety because such pesticides are dangerous to humans and animals.

The department, which was founded in 1990, has units for spraying pesticides, fighting off insects, — especially in the Jordan Valley — and a unit specialising in quarantine work.

According to a report by a British team of experts hired by the government to determine the cause of the crop failures in the past season, the damage in the valley were mainly caused by a virus called the Tomato Yellow Leaf Curl Virus carried by the white fly.

"Our department controls the type of seeds and saplings arriving into the country and carries out laboratory tests to check if they carry virus or bacteria," Dr. Haddadin said. He added that the department analyses the pesticides used for the crops, test samples of crops produced after the pesticides had been used and undertakes the process of registering imported pesticides.

In combating agricultural pests, Dr. Haddadin said, the department this year cooperated with the Royal Jordanian Air Force in spraying the farmlands, especially in the Jordan Valley. The planes are used in fighting off grasshoppers in Karak, Tafelch and Madaba, domestic flies in the Jordan Valley and pests that attack olive trees in the Balqa, Jerash and Madaba districts, Dr. Haddadin said.

In the Jordan Valley, the department has sprayed 8,400 dunums while 1,200 other dunums were sprayed by the farmers themselves, he said. He added that the crops included vegetables which are grown on 25,000 dunums in the Jordan Valley alone.

The campaign has achieved its objectives by reducing to a minimum the amount of pests and insects that used to infest the valley, especially in the summer season.

Rains cause havoc to traffic, bode well for farmers

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Rain and high winds will continue to affect Jordan through Wednesday and probably part of Thursday as a result of a persistent low depression centred east of Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean region, the Department of Meteorology announced Tuesday.

The depression has caused the creation of several cold fronts accompanied by cold winds and heavy rain that have affected Jordan and other states in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, a department official said. He said that the rains which started five days ago have been affecting all parts of Jordan in various degrees, with the Balqa and Salt regions receiving nearly 150 millimetres, Ajloun District 130 millimetres, the northern Jordan Valley 126 millimetres and Amman, Madaba and Rabbeh, 100 millimetres.

The officials expected a gradual decrease in the force of the cold fronts and the wind with a gradual rise in temperatures on Friday.

The rains have caused havoc to traffic, prompting the Public Security Department (PSD) to announce repeated warnings to motorists along all roads. The PSD said that all roads remained open except for the Amman-Dead Sea road, which has been affected by landslides. It said that motorists should be extra careful when driving in all areas due to poor visibility and slippery roads.

Municipal and civil defence teams were reported active in all governorates, opening culverts and clearing roads to ensure communication. Several parts of Amman witnessed temporary traffic disruption

due to the collection of huge pools of water and numerous road accidents resulting from the severe weather conditions.

As of Tuesday evening, the PSD reported no casualties as a result of water flooding low-lying areas or road accidents, but it issued appeals to people in 'wadis' to move to safer ground.

The Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) and the Water Authority estimated the amounts of rain water that fell on Jordan in the past few days to have accounted for 10 per cent of the annual average rain fall in the Kingdom.

The Ministry of Agriculture, for its part, described the rain as a blessing to Jordan and said that the underground reservoirs, dams and farmlands will all benefit.

One cannot judge the nature of the agricultural season at the start of the winter, but the rains in the past few days are 'sure to help farmers, said Ministry of Agriculture Secretary General Ghaleb Abu Arrabi.

The cold weather and the rains will contribute towards the elimination of the white fly that has been causing severe damage to the tomato crops in the Jordan Valley, Mr. Abu Arrabi said. He urged farmers who have not yet sown their seeds to begin immediately.

Referring to the ministry's programmes for the current season, Mr. Abu Arrabi said that the ministry will plant trees and create pasture land on 60,000 dunums. A total of four million tree saplings will be planted, he added.

Referring to Arbor Day celebrations, Mr. Abu Arrabi said that these will be held in four different locations in next month. These are in Yajouz, Marj Al Hamam and Naour as well as Amman.

Federation to review operations

AMMAN (Petra) — The fourth conference of the Arab Agricultural Cooperatives Federation will be opened in Amman on Dec. 17. The conference, which will last for three days, will discuss the general policy of the federation, the financial report for the federation's previous session, the budget for the next session and ways of supporting the Palestinian intifada. Participants in the conference are scheduled to elect a new secretary general for the next session. Taking part in the conference will be representatives of Jordan, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Kuwait, Somalia, Aritrea, Djibouti and Mauritania.

Austrian grant to help boost imports

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An industrial level Austrian trade group composed of 19 companies concluded a two-day trade mission at the Regency Hotel Tuesday, the purpose of which was to pave the way for increasing Austrian exports to Jordan, an official said.

Due to the Austrian Commodity Aid Programme, a grant in the amount of 100 million Austrian schillings (U.S. \$8.5 million) was released this year by Austria to Jordan. The grant will be used to increase the level of exports to Jordan that will exceed that of the Gulf crisis, the official said.

"Jordan has traditionally been a good market for Austrian products," said Peter Rattinger of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

Department for Foreign Trade. He is also the head of the Austrian delegation.

"This delegation is the largest such group from Austria and includes 19 companies, some of which have never had any previous trade relations with Jordan. Also in the delegation are companies that are continuing existing trade relations with Jordanian industries," Mr. Rattinger said, adding that there are many new product lines that have been introduced in this mission.

"Raw materials for pharmaceutical companies as well as packaging for medicines are examples of products that have received positive results," Mr. Rattinger said. "And an even newer product line introduced is the Railway Consultancy Services."

"Railways are a major form of transportation in Austria

and can, in many ways, help Jordan in that field," Mr. Rattinger said.

According to Dr. Michael Angerer, the commercial attaché of the Austrian embassy, this delegation deals only in industrial products.

"There is not a single consumer item dealt with by this delegation," he said.

According to Mr. Rattinger, the worst economic times in Jordan are over. "Seeing that many previous residents of Kuwait are ready to invest in new local businesses, I feel that the economic problems are beginning to be solved," he said.

The delegation dealing with product lines such as digital blood pressure monitors, ductile iron pipes, traffic lights, sack production lines as well as food flavouring industry chemicals, steel timber and electric cables will depart on Wednesday for Egypt.

Sudan, Jordan discuss promoting cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport Ali Subeimat received Monday the Sudanese minister of transport, Colonel Bajir Salahuddin Karrar.

Discussion during the meeting centred on ways of promoting cooperation between Jordan and Sudan in various fields. The meeting was attended by the Sudanese ambassador to Jordan, Col. Karrar was also received by Minister of Industry and Trade Abdullah Ensour.

The meeting discussed scopes of bilateral cooperation, particularly in economic and commercial fields. The meeting also discussed a commercial protocol signed between Jordan and Sudan last September and ways of implementing it.

وزارة الاشغال العامة والاسكان
دائرة العطاءات الحكومية
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS & HOUSING
GOVERNMENT TENDERS DIRECTORATE
GOVERNMENT TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT. INVITATION TO
TENDERS NO. (156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161/91)

Local contractors classified in field of buildings and international contractors in the same field and classification who are interested in participating in this tender are requested to contact the Government Tender Directorate at Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Amman, Jordan, to receive tender documents starting from 3/12/1991, and in accordance with the following terms:

Tender No.	Description	Classification Grade	Last Date For Submit of Tenders
(156/91)	1. Construction of Hai - Nazal Comp. Girls school area (4687)m ² 2. Construction of Abu - Alanda Comp. Girls school area (3654)m ² 3. Construction of Al - Kouwesmei (Hai - Almaadi) Comp. Girls school area (4687)m ² 4. Construction of Al - Kouwesmei (Um - Nouwara) Comp. Girls school area (3321)m ²	First	4 / 1 / 1992 Saturday
(157/91)	1. Construction of Al - Toury / Irbid Comp. Girls school area (3008)m ² 2. Construction of Kuaber Comp. Girls school / Irbid area (3063)m ² 3. Construction of Aydoon Comp. Girls school area (3008)m ²	First or second	4 / 1 / 1992 Saturday
(158/91)	1. Construction of Malkhraba Comp. Girls school area (2436)m ² 2. Construction of Bait - Ras Secon. Boys school area (3436)m ² 3. Construction of Malka Comp. Girls school area (2853)m ²	First or second	7 / 1 / 1992 Tuesday
(159/91)	1. Construction of Um - Teeneh Comp. Boys school area (3059)m ² 2. Construction of Jabal Al - Nadif Comp. Girls school area (2178)m ² 3. Construction of Jabal Al - Joufeh Comp. Girls school area (2178)m ²	First or second	7 / 1 / 1992 Tuesday
(160/91)	1. Construction of Al - Yagoudah Comp. Girls school area (2838)m ² 2. Construction of Hushan secondary girls school area (2630)m ² 3. Construction of Al - Jwaideh Comp. Girls school area (2560)m ²	First or second	11 / 1 / 1992 Saturday
(161/91)	1. Construction of Naqab Al - Dabbour secondary. Girls school area (2253)m ² 2. Construction of Aln - Al Pasha Secon. Girls school area (2872)m ²	First or second	11 / 1 / 1992 Saturday

a. The project is partially financed by the Japanese loan.
b. Work load will be considered in awarding.
c. Each tender price JD (225). Non-refundable.
d. Last date for purchase of tender documents on December 25th, 1992.
e. Offers shall be submitted to the Government Directorate before 13:30 local time on the mentioned date.

Chairman, Central Tenders Committee
Government Tenders Directorate
Eng. Basheer Al - Jaghbeer

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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Timely debate

THE SYMPOSIUM on sectarianism, organised by the Goethe Institute and the Arab Thought Forum (ATF), is a timely endeavour in view of the looming dangers of balkanisation of the Middle East region. Being the cradle of the three monotheistic religions, the Middle East is a mosaic of ethnic, religious and national diversities even though Arabs constitute by far the greater majority of the inhabitants of the area. Unless an equitable equation can be found between the majority and the minorities, — in the region as a whole and within each of its components — there will always be a danger of ethnic, religious or national frictions that may lead to widespread conflicts like what had happened in Lebanon, and Iraq or what is going on Yugoslavia at the moment. In this context, many people believe that Arab enemies are intent on manipulating ethnic and religious divisions in order to further weaken the peoples of the area and render them easier prey for exploitation.

What is occurring in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in these trying days could be only the tip of the iceberg. It is feared that the rising phenomenon of nationalism across East Europe would trigger an avalanche of similar eruptions across the south-eastern European rim that would spill over to the Middle East. This new wave of nationalism, ethnicism and sectarianism comes in stark contrast with the unifying forces at work in the advanced industrial nations of Europe where the main trend is to forge a united front based on a more enlightened vision that highlights the commonality of interests between peoples and accentuates their similarities instead of their differences.

What seems to promote sectarianism and ethnic nationalism in these times is the international approach to human rights where national, sectarian and ethnic differences are promoted and protected. The intensity of the international human rights arguments in favour of the sacrosanctity of the differences between peoples has reached ominous proportions in many U.N. human rights fora by calling for the exercise of the right of self-determination by minorities of all kinds even if that entailed the breakup of countries and the diminution of their sovereignty and independence.

We, the peoples and states of the Middle East, need to make a choice between the enlightened orientation of the advanced countries or the regressive approach of the less-developed worlds. Even at the level of Jordan, there is a great deal more that needs to be done to incorporate and apply the enlightened approach by inculcating more honestly the notion that Jordanians are Jordanians no matter where they originate from and irrespective of their religion or ethnic origin. We cannot honestly say, even in our present-day enlightened Jordan, that enough has been done in this vein. Hopefully the occasion of convening the symposium on sectarianism would serve as a launching pad for more bona fide activism in the direction of treating people equally no matter what their faiths or ethnic backgrounds are.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Tuesday dwelt on the King's speech from the throne in which he stressed the need for cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities and emphasised the fact that democracy does not mean that a certain group should impose its will or ideas on others. The paper said that the King's speech, which serves as the government's policy statement, made it clear that the way is now clear for political pluralism based on the Jordanian Constitution and the National Charter endorsed by the national congress. The paper stressed that political pluralism was a vital component of the democratic system of the country. It echoed the King's words that only through dialogue and close cooperation among the various political groups, and between the government and Parliament, can this democratic system survive. The paper said that any group trying to undermine the existing Jordanian institutions or cause intimidation to others would be considered as hostile to the democratic system built by the Jordanian people. The paper said that the Jordanian people can by no means allow any party to threaten the gains achieved and secured through a long, arduous march towards a better future, therefore, democracy in Jordan can be in no danger, regardless of the isolated incidents here and there that might temporarily mar the bright image of this country.

ISRAEL'S absence from the bilateral peace negotiations in Washington denies the Jewish state's repeated claims over the past decades that it was keen on reaching peace with its Arab neighbours. By favourably responding to Washington's call to meet in the American capital, the Arabs have now called Israel's bluff and exposed its real intentions to the whole world, the paper said. It said that the Arab countries and the Palestinians want to see the U.N. Security Council resolutions implemented and want to see the international legitimacy respected by all parties, in stark contrast with Israel's position which wants to perpetuate occupation of Arab land. The paper said that the Arabs have been expecting Israel's manoeuvres in the course of the peace negotiations, but this refusal to attend the purely in the American capital on schedule served as a blow to the U.S. credibility and a challenge to Washington's will. This irresponsible attitude and continued disregard of the will and the desires of the international community, said the paper, places the co-sponsors of the peace parity face-to-face with their serious responsibilities towards world peace and security.

Economic Forum

The controversial issue of subsidies

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

SUBSIDIES on the prices of certain consumer goods (basically flour, bread, sugar and rice) stand out as a main bone of contention in Jordan. The issue has gathered more heat because it has been presented and debated in the context of the IMF-sponsored economic adjustment programme.

The theory of market economy resents subsidies. Not only those relating to any group of consumer goods, but also those given to producers such as the vast subsidies extended to agricultural products in the bulwarks of market economies, namely the United States and the European Community. Export subsidies are also detested but not hotly debated.

By purely economic criterion, subsidies should be disputed and most probably faulted. Price-subsidised products are sold in the market at prices lower than their cost. In logic and theory, this is wrong; it allures overconsumption, that is waste, on the part of the consumer and destroys the motivation to cut costs on the part of the producer. In the final analysis, this is a net national loss.

But the trouble is that price subsidies given to basic consumer goods are not a pure economic issue. They have a very important social dimension which cold-blooded market economists tend to discard. This social aspect is most magnified where subsidies date back a long time, in which case they are firmly built into the economic and spending behaviour of households.

The fragile aspect of the IMF-sponsored adjustment programme is not only that it tries to coolly overlook the social implications of subsidies, but that it also recommends dismantling

them over a short period of time. Indeed, very short compared to their life to date. Any successful treatment of these subsidies should, in my view, be based on phasing them out very gradually over an extended period of time, exactly as a habit-forming drug is withdrawn.

The abolishing of basic goods subsidies is being marketed under the pretext that subsidies should go only to groups who really deserve them. On the face of it, this plea sounds lofty, noble and very powerful. But then you come to define who deserves and who does not and find that all Jordanians fall under the definition of those who qualify for receiving subsidies while all non-Jordanians do not. This dichotomy does not only evoke the foul smell of discrimination, but invokes the ridiculous images of every country in the area trying to shield itself against foreigners. Thus Jordanians in the Gulf states, Egypt or Syria, for example, will also be classified as non-deservers there. Imagine the consequential anarchy if this philosophy spreads throughout the area (under the banner of economic adjustment). Because the number of Jordanians abroad is more than the number of non-Jordanians residing in Jordan, we will be the net loser of this subsidy-abolishing game.

It is also maintained that the category of those who do not deserve subsidies include users such as restaurants, hotels and certain manufacturers (candy factories, for example) which should be denied these subsidies. This is, simply, a sort of self-fooling because the respective owners pass the resulting price

increase to the final consumers, whether they deserve the subsidy or not.

If there is a system for sorting out those who really deserve subsidies, that will be fine. Practically, however, there is no such system exists. The economic status of any person or household shifts perpetually to the extent that no computer can keep up with these shifts or trace them. Today one is employed, tomorrow he is laid off. This month or year you make fat or meager profits but incur a loss the next year or month.

And it is strange how adamant the IMF and the market economists are about wiping out subsidies on commodity prices while tolerating subsidies on services, particularly public health services and education. Most probably, the very social dimension mentioned above to justify the call for abandoning subsidies is invoked here to justify the contrary. Actually, the IMF is furthering a world order based on free trade where only the fittest survives and is hardly concerned about remedying budget deficits as a matter of principle.

During the Gulf crisis, when Jordan bought crude oil from Iraq at prices lower than world market prices, the IMF cried out when it saw Jordanian consumers buying gasoline at prices not less than the world prices, that is about their cost. Now the question is as follows: Is it in the interests of the Jordanian economy to engage in building that world order even at the expense of our social considerations and interests?

Japan, U.S. struggle to redefine the ties that bind

By Linda Sieg Reuter

TOKYO (R) — Half a century after Japan plunged into war with the United States, the two nations, though now firm allies, are struggling to redefine ties often marred by emotionalism and outdated roles as feudal overlord and vassal.

"The fundamental issue is the power switch," said Robert Orr, director of the Japan Stanford Centre in Kyoto.

"The U.S. is not prepared to deal with the fact that there has been a change in the power relationship with Japan," Mr. Orr said.

"And Japan talks about having a global power role, but I'm not convinced they're totally on board in terms of responsibility."

"Both sides have yet to come

to grips with the change."

In Japan the approach of the 50th anniversary of Japan's Dec. 7 attack on Pearl Harbor has brought intense scrutiny of the tie with Tokyo's former enemy and erstwhile mentor.

Running through many of the musings is a sense of frustration with America's perceived failure to recognise Japan as an equal partner on the world stage, and sometimes the fear that such frustration could fuel an anti-American backlash.

The frustration is symbolised by the newly-coined term "Ken-bei," variously translated as "dislike of America," "disrespect for America," or even "apathy towards America."

"To a large degree, 'keobei' is the emotional baggage you get in a one-sided love affair," said Yunkio Okamoto, a former diplomat and

now president of consulting firm Okamoto Associates.

"Japan... had been looking at the U.S. as the most friendly and favourable nation," Mr. Okamoto said.

"If you talk to people on the street, automatically America will come up as their greatest friend and they know successive governments have tried hard — sometimes without much legitimacy — to bend Japanese policy to accommodate American demands."

Anti-Japanese sentiment which flared in the United States when Japan waffled over how to support the U.S.-led military effort in the Gulf war last year is often cited as a prime example of America's failure to give credit where credit is due.

tokyo, constrained by its U.S. — drafted peace constitu-

tion which cast America as patron and Japan as client.

"The U.S. has been the patron and Japan has been taken care of, and this came to be seen as natural," said former diplomat Motofumi Asai, now a political science professor at Nihon University.

"Not only America got used to this but the government and the (ruling) Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) as well, and they didn't criticise it as they should."

Americans can be equally frustrated with what they perceive as Japan's reluctance to shoulder the global responsibilities commensurate with its economic might. The question is, in what role does Japan see herself? asked former special U.S. presidential envoy Richard Armitage at a symposium on U.S.-Japan ties.

"Does Japan see herself as a partner, as a student at the hand of the master, as a builder or as a master builder alongside the U.S.? If Japan can answer that question, Japan and the U.S. can work out their roles together."

A new generation of Japanese politicians, however, may be increasingly willing to answer such questions — and not necessarily in ways Americans will want to hear.

Sueh politicians, including Ichiro Ozawa, a former LDP secretary general who has been widely tipped as a potential prime minister, say they want Japan to define its interests and goals and to articulate them forcefully.

"All too often Japanese tend to quote others to force themselves to act," Mr. Ozawa told the same symposium.

Jordan — political management of economic adjustment during transition

By Izzat Dajani

JORDAN is now in the process of renegotiating its agreements with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) so as to adjust the Kingdom's economy and reschedule its foreign debt. The country is passing through a rather unique set-up of incidences. The process of economic adjustment is happening at the same time that the country is going through a political transition towards more democratisation and increased liberalisation. To complicate things further, the recent crisis and war in the Gulf, the deportation of Jordanian workers, the loss in remittances and the sharp decline in markets opened to Jordanian exports had all contributed to this complex picture of Jordan's economic prospects and its chances for readjustment and eventual recovery.

Our analysis will focus on incidences of successes with examples drawn from various countries. Some, possibly, represent extreme cases of economic chaos, as in Latin American nations, and their eventual structural and economic adjustment and recovery. This is not to say that Jordan is characterised such extremity, but rather to show that the country has every potential for success of adjustment and growth since nations with more serious crisis showed amazing results following their economic policies. The task needs political commitment and sensitivity. The figurative approach needs to take the form of a "soft heart" for policy sensitivity but a "hard head" for policy statements and decisions.

During the transition, there are government efforts towards popular mobilisation. Transition is a process that is a result of incidents, such as internal restoration or internal reformulation. During the transition, the property rights of the bourgeoisie are inviolable, and the military institutional existence, assets and hierarchy cannot be threatened. These are important rules to prevent the return of the cycle. Pluralism is legitimate and unlimited as no force is used to exclude anyone from this process. Political forces appear to represent and reflect social ones, and commit them to the support of government policies. Planning is considered on a long- and short-term basis. It must be understood that the process is slower with a coalition-building-structure in a democracy as compared to a faster process and centralised structure in an authoritarian set up. One must always remember that bureaucracies are reluctant to give up power. The leadership is central in allowing and facilitating things to "move ahead."

The politically-organised strengths and weaknesses of the society must be analysed as new groups, that were not part of the original pact, can play a role or be excluded. In a transition, there are problems of raised expectations among the populace, and longer lead-times of having things done. The government needs to mobilise resources, develop systems, incorporate new groups and respond to demand. The decisional capacity of the government becomes slow, and needs to deal with parties that are fragmented and with little experience.

Effective economic adjustment requires overcoming political opposition in which the regime must calculate how the process will affect various members of the coalition. It also requires a compromise between state and market forces in which the former needs technocratic and bureaucratic ability to synthesise and implement policies of adjustment. There is a need for adequate resources with effective use of external financial assistance. Records show that constitutional governments have done as well as authoritarian regimes in managing adjustment policies during the 1980s. The difficulty in sustaining stable macro-economic policies remained a feature of the new democratic regimes. However, analysis and good strategy make a difference in averting crisis during times of economic readjustment. This is a medium-term effort to reorient the economy based on its increased productivity and competitiveness in the world economy — problems solved through better utilisation of country's resources.

The adjustment process takes the form of either inwardly-oriented import substitution with protectionist device, or outwardly export-oriented, whereby countries applying the latter

strategy had higher rates of GDP growth, lower unemployment and more equitable income distribution.

Some argue that stabilisation must precede structural adjustment. But in Bolivia (1985-88) they were both combined successfully. Export promotion has potential for long-term sustained growth, as import-substitution is faced with the limitations of the domestic markets, especially in countries with population less than 10 million people, like Jordan. Striking the balance between economically viable and politically feasible policies is the key to government success. The government needs to understand the purposes of new policies and measures to be taken, who are the winners and losers, and how similar economic changes were successfully managed by other governments. Leaders responsible for adjustment must be more concerned with who really supports or opposes them than with just who might benefit from such policies. Costa Rica avoided confrontation by granting wage increases before devaluing with the intention to keep exports competitive. The government must be aware of the various forces affecting its policies. Such forces include the necessity of meeting donor requirements, population demands to recover its levels of living and pressures from military business, organised labour and pressure groups.

As in Jordan, governments taking over after relative economic chaos can maximise on the popular support for adjustment policies. There is a need to create a high sense of involvement by business, labour and popular organisations and to consult with them regularly. A sense of equity and fairness of policy must be portrayed by the government.

In Costa Rica, wages were partially indexed to help keep up with inflation, and a policy of mini-devaluations was implemented to accustom people to this adjustment. People were constantly reminded of government intentions to maintain the adjustment efforts and this constant seriousness led to the return of flight capital.

In the 70s, the Korean president consulted with industrialists constantly to help them with their problems and encourage them to export. He still introduced guidelines and intervention policies, but they were accepted as he already built his consensus. Taiwan went further by encouraging industrialists to set up a fund to award successful exporters. Winning the bureaucracy remains to be a vital factor for the success of policies of adjustment. It is always best to start with the policy areas that are easier to control, and work towards the coalitions in areas that are more difficult.

Historically, governments that were "winners" understood the important role donors play in their adjustment programmes. They set at establishing credibility by stating their clear intentions and furnishing the international donors teams with the true account figures. Costa Rica (1983) arranged meetings of donor agencies with industrialists and agriculturalists in order to make such donors more familiar with local conditions. This resulted in favourable amendments to the World Bank 1983 Costa Rica report. It also was aware that reaching an agreement was in their own and the World Bank's interest. They further understood the bank's decision-making process and pursued a policy of quick agreement on easy issues first, followed by phases in evaluation of other policies putting into effect those enjoying broader consensus.

Ghana in 1982 controlled the agenda by approaching donors with its own plan that fitted well with international donor guidelines. Taiwan understood well the geopolitical game. Between 1959-1965 it received substantial aid from U.S. by convincing the latter that it was a key element along the U.S. defence perimeter. When "democratic" Costa Rica (1982) appeared threatened by external and internal destabilisation forces, substantial inflows of funds occurred. Jordan is no exception, and the serious efforts by the government shall prove rewarding. Relatively, the country possesses many of the ingredients necessary for the success of economic readjustment and recovery.

Palestinians accuse Israelis of electric shock torture

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli interrogators have used electric shock torture to extract confessions from prisoners in the occupied territories, a Palestinian human rights group charged Tuesday.

The Palestine Human Rights Information Centre, a group linked to leading Palestinian nationalist Faisal Al Hussein, said it had documented eight cases this year, all in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron.

"It is highly unlikely — indeed virtually impossible — that the actions of these interrogators in torturing detainees with electricity were not known by the inter-

rogator's superiors, and possibly others," the centre said in a 76-page report co-written by an American lawyer.

A spokesman for the Israeli army said he would check the charges in the report. However, interrogation is normally carried out by the Shin Bet secret police.

The report said electric shock torture was carried out by at least five different interrogators at the Hebron military headquarters, always during the night. Seven cases, including the torture of a 14-year-old boy, were in April and one in September, the centre said.

Israeli secret police have been

officially authorised to use "moderate" physical pressure to extract information. Most Palestinian prisoners are convicted on the basis of confessions.

The authorised methods remain secret but there are frequent charges by both Palestinian and Israeli human rights groups of beatings, sensory deprivation and psychological torture.

"The need for special equipment and training points to the conclusion that these interrogators were acting in accordance with official policy, if not under direct orders," the report said.

Jeffrey Dillman, the American lawyer who co-wrote the report, said all eight documented cases of electric shock torture involved minor charges such as throwing rocks or unfurling Palestinian flags. Another score of reports were under study.

The report, which appealed for

a foreign inquiry into the Israeli interrogation system, printed three of the affidavits provided by the eight Palestinians alleged to have been tortured.

"I was shaking and shivering and was not able to scream even though I tried," said Ramzi Dana, 20, arrested in September. "I heard him laugh every time they shocked me with electricity. In addition, they kicked me in my abdomen after every shock."

The report commented that torture is banned by international laws and said it feared that Israeli use of electric shock — which was alleged infrequently over the past two decades — was becoming more common.

Despite the centre's concern at the apparent use of electric shock torture, it said several of those involved were more frightened by the beatings they had received.

Negotiators await Israelis

(Continued from page 1)

substantial discussions on issues related to genuine peace," he said.

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi told reporters: "We have come here in good faith and with a genuine will and resolve to seek just peace that can be achieved through genuine and serious talks."

"We are not here to buy time or to waste it," Dr. Ashrawi said. "We seek to engage in genuine and serious negotiations... on Wednesday, we are determined to overcome obstacles, not to create them."

Haider Abdul Shafi, the chief Palestinian negotiator, said the delegation was not leaving Washington this week if the Israelis did not turn up for Wednesday's talks.

"We shall wait for them," Dr. Abdul Shafi said. "We are serious about making peace."

The possible delay in starting the second round of Arab-Israeli peace talks, which were launched in Madrid with the opening of the Middle East peace conference Oct. 30-Nov. 2, underlined the depth of differences in substance and approach to the peace process between the Israelis and Arabs.

Israel, upset by the American invitation to the parties for the bilateral and a set of "proposals/principles" which it sees as a U.S. effort to dictate terms to the Middle East negotiators, says that its delegation will be in Washington on Dec. 9 to discuss procedural matters, with the main theme being its desire to shift the venue to the Middle East after one or two sessions in the U.S. capital.

On the other hand, all the Arab delegations have affirmed that they would insist on discussing issues of substance with the Israelis and would not allow themselves to be bogged down in what they see as Israeli stalling over procedures.

Arafat

(Continued from page 1)

West Bank under international protection.

"From the Palestinian point of view we're talking about a complete transfer of power under the umbrella of Palestinian sovereignty and international protection."

Dr. Shaath — who played a key backstage role in the first round of talks last month in Madrid — did not receive a U.S. visa for the Washington meeting.

He said Palestinians rejected the Israeli concept of Palestinian self-determination spelled out in its 1979 peace treaty with Egypt because it excluded rights to land, legislation, and water.

Dr. Ashrawi said the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation were still being subjected to penalties and harsh measures imposed by the occupation authorities because "the Palestinians are seeking peace and have the courage to speak loudly of their desire for peace."

"Regrettably, the only response we have received from Israel is continuing oppression," she said. "Our positive response to the peace process was met by the Israeli side in the form of continuing settlements in the occupied territories."

The Palestinians "paid dearly for their participation in the Madrid conference," she added. "Israel is continuing its policy of confiscating Arab land, demolishing Palestinian homes and closing down universities," she said pointing out the West Bank's Bir Zeit University, where she works as an English-language professor, was recently ordered to remain closed for another three months.

She said the Palestinian delegation was in Washington in line with the will of the Palestinian people and leadership. The Palestinians believe that the language of oppression and domination will not continue "to be the characteristic of the 21st century," she said.

"Let us base our future and that of the Israelis on mutual recognition and common rights."

Dr. Ashrawi said a dispute over visas for advisors for the Palestinian delegation was "settled." She did not refer to any details of the dispute but sources said in Amman that the U.S. administration did not issue visas to some of the advisors who are members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Dr. Ashrawi paid tribute to the American role in the Middle East peace process and said that "we feel that America is serious and is determined to pursue this process."

"We feel happy about the American position and we really need that commitment on the part of the U.S.," she added.

Shamir

(Continued from page 1)

one of our Arab neighbours, there will not be peace or any agreement," Mr. Shamir said.

A key aide to Mr. Shamir said on Monday that Israel would send "some representation" to peace talks next Monday but still wanted a U.S. reply to Israel's terms.

"The idea of starting talks without us isn't serious," Yossi Ben Aharon told Israel Television. "After all, they can't do anything without us."

U.S. will not block Chinese nuclear sale to Syria

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has no plans to block Syria's efforts to obtain a Chinese-made nuclear reactor that U.S. officials say is far research and not for building nuclear weapons.

U.S. analysts say the reactor would probably not pose a threat to other nations but would be important since it would represent the first nuclear technology acquired by Syria.

The project, still under consideration by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), would let Syria obtain a miniature 30-kilowatt neutron source reactor made by China.

"Our position is that Syria is a party to the NPT (nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) and, as in any other nuclear activity including countries that are NPT parties, full scope safeguards should be in place before such cooperation takes place," a State Department official said Friday.

He said Washington would accede to the sale of the reactor to Damascus if the safeguards, including provisions for international inspections, were put in place.

Whether Syria would go along with the safeguards is still under discussion, added the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

But he stressed that the reactor being considered was a "miniature" variety, used as a source of neutrons in laboratory research.

"It's not a significant piece of nuclear cooperation or expertise... it's not a weapons-type technology. It's not something that raises concerns," he said.

Leonard Specter, a non-proliferation expert with the Car-

negie Endowment for International Peace, said that while the reactor is "probably not strategically dangerous" to other countries, the decision to go ahead with it is "politically significant."

The reactor would represent the first nuclear technology acquired by Syria, one of the few countries in the Middle East with no nuclear activity at all.

It would mark the beginning of an effort by Damascus to build a cadre of nuclear specialists and a small infrastructure, Mr. Specter said in an interview.

He said virtually all countries that now have nuclear weapons started small by acquiring tiny reactors, and so Syria's programme, if implemented, "could eventually lead to something" although it probably would take a long time.

Mr. Specter said he would be surprised if the administration did not try, behind the scenes, to slow down the Syrian programme.

Although it still formally includes Syria on its list of countries that sponsor "terrorism," the Bush administration in recent months has gone out of its way to cooperate with Syria, a key player in efforts to make progress on Middle East peace.

But it has opposed China's plans to sell missiles to Syria.

Hostage-takers put bag over head of U.N. envoy

UNITED NATIONS (R) — U.N. envoy Giandomenico Picco, who travels around the Middle East negotiating the release of hostages and prisoners, had a bag put over his head whenever he went to meet with the hostage-takers in Lebanon.

A U.N. official Monday said the bag was probably removed as the negotiations proceeded but the hostage-takers felt it was necessary to keep their whereabouts secret.

"In the course of the negotiations, in taking him to meet with the various groups, he had a bag over his head in the car," the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Reuters about the two-metre tall Italian diplomat.

Mr. Picco, as a special representative for Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, has pieced together a complex three-sided hostage deal, trading Westerners held in Beirut, Lebanese held by Israel and Israelis missing in Lebanon.

"I am a mountain man, I am stubborn, we will finish this," he once told Reuters about the talks.

His negotiations have brought him face-to-face with the hostage-takers and inevitably exposed him to danger, including the possibility of being kidnapped.

For this reason Mr. Perez de Cuellar sharply criticised on Monday what he called the "Anglo-Saxon press," which he said overlooked the U.N. role securing the release of hostages.

"It's not for me I want the credit," he told Reuters later. "There are all these other people working on it."

The United Nations had been extremely discreet about negotiations.

But on Monday in Damascus, Mr. Picco was beside Joseph Ciccipio when the former U.S. hostage was handed over to the U.S. ambassador at the Syrian Foreign Ministry.

Appearing for the first time at the handover ceremony of a freed hostage, Mr. Picco congratulated Mr. Ciccipio on behalf of Mr. Perez de Cuellar and said the U.N. chief was determined "to continue work to get all hostages freed."

In his comments to reporters Mr. Perez de Cuellar said, "I hope for once the press, mainly the Anglo-Saxon press, gives some credit to the United Nations because nothing is more unpleasant and discouraging than when I open the paper and I don't see any reference to the United Nations as if the release were a miracle."

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Real estate leaders urge Bush to act fast on economy

WASHINGTON (R) — Leaders of the recession-hit U.S. real estate industry urged President George Bush Monday to move quickly to stimulate the economy but Mr. Bush remained cautious, saying he had no intention of making a wrong move.

"I'm not going to do anything dumb," Mr. Bush said just before the meeting started at the White House.

The meeting with leaders of an industry hit hard by the economic downturn put more pressure on Mr. Bush to do something dramatic to get the economy moving.

The real estate leaders said they told Mr. Bush he should not wait until his annual state of the union speech in late January, as he would like to do, to announce any initiatives.

The group urged the president to act now and not wait for the state of the union.

Angelo Mozilo, president of the Mortgage Bankers Association of America, told reporters.

Asked if he saw any signs of recovery, Mr. Mozilo replied: "Absolutely not. It's getting worse."

He said Mr. Bush receptive to comments from the more than a dozen industry leaders but "provided no assurances" of any swift new action.

Robert Larson, board chairman of the National Realty Committee, took a more optimistic view.

"I don't think the recovery is here, but I think many of the fundamentals are in place. It does

need serious attention and I think the president shares that view," Mr. Larson said.

The White House plan seems to be to sweat out the bad times and hope that low interest rates and low inflation spark a positive trend in fourth-quarter economic indicators.

Mr. Bush so far has sided with advisers who reject any "quick fix" to the economy, believing it would do more harm than good.

Conservative Republicans and opposition Democrats are calling for tax cuts.

Spokesman Martin Fitzwater made clear the White House would take its own time in deciding what to do.

"We're considering the issue, looking at all kinds of alternatives. We'll operate on the timetable we think is most productive," he told reporters.

He rebuffed Senator Robert Dole's proposal that Mr. Bush convene a meeting of Republican leaders to map strategy for rejuvenating the economy.

The president's popularity continues to be dragged down by economic problems. A weekend poll by Time magazine and Cable News Network put Mr. Bush's approval rating at 46 per cent, the first time it has dropped below 50 per cent.

Mr. Bush tried to show a government trying to help people, admitting: "Many Americans want to know what their government is doing right now to get the economy moving again."

He said he would sign a \$151 billion transportation bill next week and ordered Transportation Secretary Sam Skinner to speed money to the states for job-intensive projects for an "instant benefit" to the economy.

The six-year programme for highway construction and mass transit is supposed to create two million jobs.

"We want to ensure that human problems that remain the most acute by the current economic climate are addressed as effectively as possible by the executive branch," he said.

Meanwhile, growth in the U.S. manufacturing sector slowed to a virtual standstill in November as an economic recovery appeared to run out of steam, a group of purchasing executives said Monday.

The National Association of Purchasing Management said its monthly index fell to 50.1 per cent in November from 53.5 per cent in October. A reading above 50 per cent shows the manufacturing sector is expanding, while a reading below that level indicates the sector is declining.

The manufacturing sector had been one of the few bright spots in the economy this year, rallying after the outcome of the Gulf war led to a burst of euphoria. But now the sector appears to be sliding back into recession, economists said.

"The manufacturing side of the economy is fading very rapidly as one of the sources of growth," said Allen Sinai, chief economist for Boston Co.

Cuba idles 10,000 tractors

HAVANA, Cuba (R) — Cuba's agriculture ministry has stopped using 10,000 tractors at livestock and forestry farms because of shortage of fuel, the Cuban Communist Party newspaper Granma has said.

It was the latest step in a nationwide energy-saving campaign by the communist government triggered by serious disruptions in oil supplies from the Soviet Union.

Granma said the tractors were being replaced by "animal traction" — horse-drawn carts or yokes of oxen.

The idle tractors were being stored in tractor parks around the country and would be maintained until fuel was available to start using them again, it said.

Around 25,000 tractors were still in use on farms that grow citrus, rice and general produce destined for national consumption or export.

Granma said measures were being taken to save fuel in these vehicles by watering-down the diesel fuel they used or regulating their fuel-injection pumps.

The newspaper was careful to point out that this drastic cutback in the use of fuel-powered vehicles did not apply to sugar cane, Cuba's main export crop.

President Fidel Castro has said that Cuba will still cut its 1991-1992 sugar crop with mechanical harvesters as mobilising, housing and feeding tens of thousands of workers to cut the cane by hand would be more expensive and less efficient.

Nevertheless, the 1991-1992 harvest, which has not yet officially started, faces major difficulties posed by shortages of fuel, fertiliser and spare parts.

Cuba produced 7.6 million tonnes of sugar in its 1990-1991 crop.

Kenya gets World Bank loans

WASHINGTON (R) — The World Bank has approved two loans for Kenya totalling \$86 million, but board sources warned that the country's welcome at the bank's lending window is wearing thin.

They said the bank may cut off all but the most basic of project loans to Kenya if the country fails to put its economy in shape and cut down on government corruption.

"We have heard a lot of promises, but not in the way of performance," said one board

source, who declined to be identified.

The World Bank said that it will lend Kenya \$55 million to help the country improve its university system and another \$31 million for health care. Both loans will be for 40 years and carry no interest charge.

The sources said executive directors from most of the major industrial countries were highly critical of Kenya's economic performance and its alleged government corruption when the bank's

board met to discuss the loans last month.

In an unusual move, a summary of the board's discussions was presented to the Kenyan government when aid donors to the country met in Paris under the chairmanship of the World Bank.

The former British colony receives about \$1 billion a year from Western donors in aid and loans but is currently under close scrutiny for human rights abuses, a crackdown on dissent and high-level corruption.

ADB credits robust Asian economies for leading world growth this year

MANILA (R) — Asia's robust economies outperformed the rest of the world in 1991, posting growth of more than six per cent despite the recession in North America, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said Tuesday.

Natural exceptions were Bangladesh, India and the Philippines, where growth slowed significantly in 1991, the Manila-based bank said in a report.

"In contrast to previous world recessions, for instance the 1981-82 recession, the economic performance of the Asian region has been less affected by the economic slowdown in industrialised countries," the bank said.

While predicting a slowdown in Japanese growth to 3.3 per cent in real gross national product (GNP) in 1992 from 4.5 per cent this year, the bank said the developing countries of Asia would continue to post strong growth.

Although the newly industrialising economies of Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea would see average growth fall slightly to 7.3 per cent in 1992 from 7.7 per cent this year, other southeast and south Asian economies would expand faster, with the Indian economy picking up.

"Hong Kong should continue to see some acceleration in its growth rate mainly as a result of strong export demand and sizeable increase in public invest-

ments for infrastructure," the ADB said in an update to its annual Asian Development Outlook report.

This included the start of work on a \$16 billion airport and port. But labour shortages and slower productivity growth would limit the expansion of the Singapore economy next year.

While growth could pick up in both Indonesia and the Philippines, tight monetary policies in Malaysia and Thailand would hold growth steady.

"Infrastructure bottlenecks and, in the case of Malaysia some manpower shortages, will continue to constrain growth in both economies," the ADB report added.

Growth rates in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka would recover from the Gulf crisis, which saw the loss of millions of dollars in remittances as expatriates fled Middle East jobs.

But the bank warned that balance-of-payments and fiscal deficits throughout the south Asian economies would remain large.

"India in particular has been experiencing a severe foreign exchange crunch. In the short term, the (economic) reforms could have a cost in terms of rapidly increasing imports," cautioned the bank, which was founded 25

years ago and now has a membership of 52 nations.

It said inflation, which had accelerated in all Asian countries in 1991, would fall again because of tight monetary policies to a regional average of 7.5 per cent in 1992, from 8.6 per cent this year.

The report said Asian economies had withstood the recession better this time round because the slowdown was limited mainly to North America and Britain.

Domestic demand in many Asian countries was also now much stronger, along with regional trade.

Chinese imports, in particular, expanded by almost 20 per cent in 1991, compared with a 13 per cent fall in 1990.

The ADB also said that world economic growth is expected to pick up next year after virtually stagnating in 1991, with the United States leading the recovery.

It forecast that global interest rates would not increase significantly and that world trade would grow at about 5.0 per cent next year.

The bank said that despite the speedy end of the Gulf conflict, global economic performance in 1991 had fallen short of expectations.

Real growth in world GNP was seen falling to 0.4 per cent in 1991, from 2.0 per cent last year,

pulled down by recession in the United States and Britain, and a dramatic decline in output in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe.

But the ADB said prospects were better for 1992, and forecast world GNP growth of around 2.3 per cent, assuming generally soft commodity prices, no new shocks to the global economy and oil prices of around \$20 a barrel.

It said the turnaround would be led by the "Anglo-Saxon" economies, with the United States posting growth of 3.0 per cent, against a negative 0.3 per cent this year.

Growth in Britain was seen recovering to 1.6 per cent in 1992, against a negative 1.8 per cent this year.

Middle Eastern economies would also bounce back after the shock of the Gulf war, with growth anticipated at 11.2 per cent in 1992, against a negative 4.0 per cent this year.

But the report said that both Japan and Germany would see slower growth in the coming year.

"The rebound in the U.S. economy will continue to be led by the manufacturing sector, although it will be considerably weaker than the average of other recoveries in the post-war era," said the bank.

"The financial sector and commercial real estate will remain

weak and a large debt overhang will continue to constrain investment spending and aggregate consumer demand," the report added.

"There should, however, be some peace dividend later in the year as capital spending on military hardware begins to be channelled into more labour-intensive public sector projects," the ADB said.

"In Japan, it is anticipated that monetary policy will remain restrictive, although there have been signs of some easing during the fourth quarter of 1991," it said.

"However, the wealth effects of declines in land and stock market prices, combined with difficulties in the financial sector will continue to be felt," it said.

It said the growth in Japan's big trade surplus was expected to continue in 1992 as the world economy recovered.

"The composition of the surplus will continue to shift away from the United States toward Europe and Asia," it said.

Major economic difficulties in the Soviet Union meant that "even the most optimistic observers cannot predict positive growth in the Soviet Union for at least another year."

It said the Soviet economy would contract by four to five per cent in 1992.

Soviet coffee drinkers face test of nerves next year

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet Union, plagued by a severe shortage of hard currency, has some more bad news for suffering consumers — no coffee imports are planned for 1992.

TASS news agency has said that the Soviet Union had signed "no contracts for coffee purchases for 1992 and Soviet coffee processing plants were facing closure amid shortages in scheduled deliveries for 1991."

"The country has not signed contracts to buy this product in 1992 because of the shortage of hard currency funds," TASS said.

It said the Soviet Union had received only about 50,000 tonnes of 80,000 tonnes contracted from India, Vietnam and Laos this year.

"India is fulfilling its obligations but Vietnam and Laos, which owe us 18,000 tonnes, have sent nothing so far," TASS quoted V. Sazonov, an official with the Soyuzplodimport association, as saying.

Air freight traffic declines IATA figures show world airlines registering rise in passenger growth

GENEVA (R) — Airline passenger traffic was up worldwide in October for the first time this year, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said Monday.

But IATA, with 204 members grouping most of the world's airlines, said air freight traffic which has also been severely hit over the past 18 months by the Gulf crisis and economic recession, was still declining.

Passenger traffic, which includes revenue, numbers of travellers and their distance flown, was up three per cent in

October against the same period in 1990, figures released by IATA in Geneva showed.

"This is a long-awaited encouragement for the industry, but such late growth cannot make a big difference to the year's traffic results," IATA Director-General Gunther Eser said in a statement.

At IATA's annual general meeting in Nairobi in October, Mrs. Eser reported that its members had made losses totalling \$2.7 billion in 1990 and faced probably much heavier deficits

this year largely because of the Gulf war in January and February.

At that time, an IATA financial report estimated losses for the first three months of this year, during which a U.S.-led allied coalition forced Iraq out of Kuwait, at \$2.5 billion.

But IATA officials had expected an earlier recovery, and initially predicted September would see passenger traffic go over the 1990 level for the first time this year.

In his statement Monday, Mr. Eser said freight traffic was still suffering the effects of recession. "The airlines have many painful months ahead as they claw their way back to profitability," he added.

The IATA figures showed passenger growth in October in all areas of the world except South America. The biggest increases occurred in Asia.

But IATA said it now seemed unlikely that even the generally successful Asian carriers would show overall growth over the whole of 1991.

Private sector to spend \$872m in Iran's petrochemical industry

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's private sector, allowed for the first time to invest in the petrochemical industry, is spending up to \$872 million in hard currency to set up nine plants, Oil Minister Gholamreza Azagadeh said Monday.

Quoted by Tehran Radin, he also said an Iranian businessman based in the United Arab Emirates had agreed to invest \$350

million to build a petrochemical plant in Iran.

He did not name the businessman and it was not clear from the report whether his project was among the nine plants, which will produce intermediate materials for plastics, dyes, pharmaceuticals and other industries.

Mr. Azagadeh first announced the offer for private investment in

petrochemicals in April as part of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's plan to limit the government's role in the economy.

Iran is a major oil producer but its petrochemical industry is undeveloped. It imports \$2 billion worth of petrochemical products each year.

Mr. Azagadeh said the government would supply the new plants with hard currency for the initial investment at the "competitive" rate of 600 rials per dollar — significantly cheaper than the open market rate of about 1,450 rials.

The plants can buy their raw materials from the state-owned National Petroleum Company at a 10 per cent discount. They can market their products in Iran or abroad, the minister said.

Some of the nine projects are to be built by semi-governmental institutions like municipalities. Mr. Azagadeh said they would involve a total hard cash investment of \$872 million but gave no figure for their ryal cost.

The government would consider authorising more privately-owned petrochemical projects in future, he added.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES			
LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.			
One Sterling	1.7720/30	U.S. dollars	
One U.S. dollar	1.1323/28	Canadian dollar	
	1.6137/47	Deutsche marks	
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	1.4267/74	Swiss francs	
	33.20/24	Belgian francs	
	5.5100/50	French francs	
	1216/1217	Italian lire	
	129.40/50	Japanese yen	
	5.9030/80	Swedish crowns	
	6.3475/25	Norwegian crowns	
	6.2670/2720	Danish crowns	
One ounce of gold	365.90/366.40	U.S. dollars	

New technology speeds capital flow — Reuters head

LONDON (R) — Reuters Managing Director Peter Job said Tuesday new information technology promised to increase the flow of capital around the globe.

People might be less wary about investing in other nations as computer keyboards both, them more about the "distant object of their investment" and enable them to complete transactions quickly.

"International capital flows, already great, will probably increase," Mr. Job said in a speech at Britain's Royal Institute of

International Affairs on the influence of world news agencies.

"Reuters is influential because it is usually there, lacking any political motive, following events in a consistent manner," Mr. Job said.

Reuters and its sister agencies were "the bedrock on which the foundation of knowledge of one part of the world about another basically rests."

A development of recent years was that the ability of governments to hide the truth had begun to decay.

Suharto promotes Islamic bank to fight poverty in Indonesia

BOGOR, Indonesia (R) — Indonesian President Suharto said an Islamic bank due to start operations next year would help reduce poverty.

Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population and a widening gap between rich and poor. Both have come into sharp focus in the run-up to general elections next June and presidential polls in 1993.

"We have implemented many programmes to reduce poverty, but we still have not achieved (our goal)," President Suharto told prominent Muslims in the western Java city of Bogor.

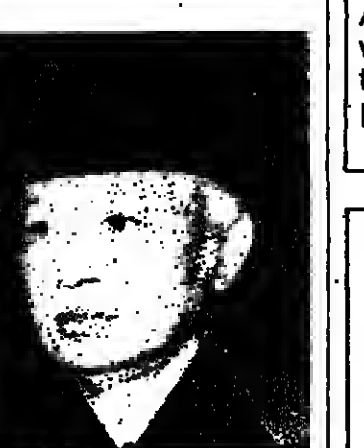
President Suharto, 70, who has not declared whether he will seek another term, urged Muslims to buy shares in the bank, saying it would help small and medium-sized businesses.

Bank Muamalat Indonesia will follow Islamic rules in its operations, forgoing the taking or payment of interest which Muslims consider a form of usury.

It will instead lend money to borrowers in exchanges for a certain percentage of their profits — a scheme acceptable to Islam. Details of the system have yet to be announced.

President Suharto said there were around 30 million people living in poverty in Indonesia, many of them rural Muslims who have hitherto shunned banks on religious grounds.

This has exacerbated the wealth gap which is at the heart of



Suharto

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Gorbachev struggles to hold union together with warning

MOSCOW (R) — President Mikhail Gorbachev, his political future undermined by Ukraine's massive vote for independence, fought grimly Tuesday to hold his disintegrating country together.

He warned in an appeal to parliament of the 12 republics that racial strife and even war between them could follow if the Soviet Union fell apart.

And in an interview to be published Wednesday, he said that "not even Jesus Christ" could break the ties uniting the peoples of the Soviet Union, according to Soviet News Agency (TASS).

The appeal, also distributed in the central Soviet parliament, said: "Disintegration is a sentence to millions of those who live outside their national republics."

"Disintegration is fraught with (the danger of) inter-ethnic, inter-republican clashes, even wars. It would be a catastrophe for the whole international community."

He urged deputies to approve a draft treaty for a union of sovereign states, his blueprint for a new confederation.

Leaders of seven republics, including Russia's Boris Yeltsin, had been due to initial the draft

on Nov. 25. But they decided instead to send it republican parliaments for approval, dashing Mr. Gorbachev's hopes for a quick signature.

The Ukraine, the second richest republic with a population of 53 million, says the proposed union treaty is dead and it will settle for nothing less than full independence.

The republic voted by a 9-1 margin Sunday to secede and won pledges of diplomatic recognition from Canada and Finland.

Washington said it was moving towards full diplomatic ties. Russian television reported Monday that Mr. Yeltsin had also decided to recognise the Ukraine, but Tuesday his press office declined to confirm or deny the report.

Mr. Gorbachev's four-page appeal, dated Dec. 3 in his own hand, did not specifically mention the Ukraine. But the 60-year-old president, who has part Ukrainian ancestry, has said several times he cannot imagine a new union without it.

He indicated even before the referendum that he would not consider a vote for independence as a bar to the Ukraine eventually joining his proposed new union.

He repeated this Monday in a

telephone call to congratulate Leonid Kravchuk, elected Ukrainian president in a simultaneous ballot Sunday.

Ukrainian leaders have unanimously rejected this interpretation, saying that independence means independence. But Mr. Gorbachev refused to accept defeat.

In his coming interview, with the weekly Literaturnaya Gazeta, Mr. Gorbachev also spoke of the possibility of another military coup, like that which removed him from office for three days in August.

"There are some who expect a new coup. Perhaps they are even organising one. Someone from the military-industrial complex, someone from the (Communist) Party structures," he told Literaturnaya Gazeta.

"If those who intend to stage a coup have even a grain of common sense, they ought to calculate five or six steps ahead... to understand that they will be disgraced and smashed."

In Tuesday's message to republican parliaments, Mr. Gorbachev said the crisis over independence was tearing the economy apart and ruining efforts at reform.

"I repeat once again that com-

mon catastrophe is unavoidable if we do not stop the process of disintegration," he said.

"That is why I ask you in the coming days to discuss the draft treaty on the union of sovereign states and approve it."

In his interview with Literaturnaya Gazeta, Mr. Gorbachev warned of the danger of a bloody conflict.

"It is all important to keep the country together, to maintain the community of peoples, human peace, our inter-ethnic peace in which peoples' destinies are intertwined so elaborately that no one will sort them out," he said in an extract published by TASS.

"Even Jesus Christ will not untangle these knots."

There have been ethnic clashes or armed confrontations in a series of trouble-spots along the Soviet Union's southern fringe but no outbreaks in the heartland.

But tensions threatened in Romanian-majority Moldova, where two secessionist districts held their own elections Sunday.

A senior Moldovan parliamentary official told TASS the results of the voting, in the predominantly Russian Dnestr and the Turkic Gagauz regions, would be annul-

Togolese premier arrested in army attack

LOME (R) — Togo's Prime Minister Joseph Kokou Koffigoh was arrested Tuesday after soldiers attacked his office, a military communiqué said, and some deaths were reported.

"He is in the hands of the Togolese Armed Forces and is completely safe," a communiqué read on state radio said.

The troops, apparently loyal to strongman President Gnassingbé Eyadema, used tanks, machine guns and small arms in their attack which lasted about 15 minutes.

A telephone operator reached inside the building before communications were cut said: "They have come in with tanks. There are some dead. Come and help us."

Ambulance sirens could be heard near the prime minister's office later in the morning.

Reporters in the capital heard heavy bombardment, and small arms fire from about 0700 GMT until 0715 GMT. There was sporadic firing afterwards.

There was no way to reach the prime minister's seaside office, where he had been held a virtual prisoner for the past six days with aides and about 50 to 60 loyal soldiers.

The troops who began their effort to overthrow Togo's transitional democratic government last week demanded Mr. Koffigoh's replacement and sweeping changes in the government installed in the tiny West African country in August by a national conference.

In their communiqué, broadcast shortly after 0900 GMT, the soldiers cautioned against any upsurge of violence by the young pro-democracy demonstrators who were one of the driving forces behind the efforts to end Gen. Eyadema's rule.

"We do not want to see any more of those rock-throwing people in the streets," the communiqué said.

Togo, a country of 3.2 million people whose leader Gen. Eyadema in 1963 mounted black Africa's first post-independence coup, was virtually cut off from the outside world.

Land borders and the international airport were closed and telephone and telex links, which have worked intermittently, were again cut.

Vance tours Osijek, checks Yugoslav truce

BELGRADE (R) — United Nations envoy Cyrus Vance, trying to arrange a peace-keeping force for Yugoslavia, visited the frontline city of Osijek Tuesday to check on the ceasefire he says is an essential pre-condition.

Croatian television, monitored in Zagreb, showed the former U.S. Secretary of State in the heavily battered east Croatian town after arriving from the federal capital Belgrade.

Mr. Vance passed through the lines after visiting the town of Dalj on the Danube River, about 30 kilometres east of Osijek, where the Belgrade-based news agency, Tanjug, said he held talks with Yugoslav federal army officers stationed there.

Croatian radio reported that Osijek, badly damaged in weeks of bombardment by the army and Serbian irregulars, had again come under sporadic shelling overnight. But it was largely quiet as Mr. Vance arrived, reports from both sides said.

U.N. officials said Mr. Vance had agreed with all sides to visit Osijek to see how the ceasefire held up after nine days — the 14th in five months of fighting in Yugoslavia — was faring in what is now the principal hotspot of the conflict.

"Most reports of lack of implementation (of the ceasefire) come from the Osijek area. We want full compliance by all parties," a U.N. spokesman said.

Mr. Vance arrived in Yugoslavia Sunday to investigate whether U.N. troops can be sent to keep the peace while a European Community-sponsored conference resumes between Yugoslavia's warring republics.

Following talks Monday with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and Federal Defence Minister Veljko Kadijevic, Mr. Vance said progress had been made but problems remained.

He has said conditions for deploying the troops include a solid ceasefire, the de-bombarding by Croatian forces of federal army barracks in Croatia and agreement between the parties on how and where to station the U.N. forces.

In an apparent sign of easing tension, Zagreb Radio said the federal navy had lifted its blockade of all Croatian ports except Dubrovnik following talks Monday night between the Croats and navy commanders. The situation in Dubrovnik, under siege by land sea for weeks, was unclear, it said.

Kenya agrees to end one-party rule

NAIROBI (R) — Kenya's ruling party agreed Tuesday to legalise opposition parties, effectively ending decades of single-party rule in the East African country.

The move was a startling political about-turn following months of international and domestic pressure.

"From today, everyone is allowed to register their party," President Daniel Arap Moi told about 3,500 cheering and foot-stomping delegates at a special conference of his Kenya African National Union (KANU) Party.

An appeal by Mr. Arap Moi for party backing to repeal section 2A of Kenya's constitution — the clause banning all opposition movements — was overwhelmingly passed by a show of hands.

"Let us remove section 2A of the constitution. Let us search out the opposition," the president, 67 and in power since 1978, said to deafening applause.

A formal vote on the proposal was expected later Tuesday, but attorney Amos Wako told Reuters that its adoption was a mere formality.

"In principle, this is it. Section 2A is removed," he said. Mr. Arap Moi cautioned that all future parties would need to have a national and not tribal base to be permitted.



Daniel Arap Moi

Cholera threatens Brazil's cities

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — A Latin American cholera epidemic has spread into Brazil from Peru and now threatens Brazil's teeming cities and shantytowns, according to health and sanitation experts.

They said in interviews in the last few days that the consequences of cholera, which has killed more than 3,000 people in Latin America this year, could be catastrophic in cities like Rio and Sao Paulo.

Cases of the bacterial disease in Brazil are still few compared to neighbouring Peru, where the disease appeared last January for the first time in a century. About 270,000 people in Peru have been

stricken this year. About 2,500 have died.

Though a prevention programme has so far had good results, officials say, health experts say it is only a matter of time before cholera hits hard in Latin America's biggest country.

"It is inevitable cholera will arrive in Rio," said Dr. Jorge Darze, director of a Rio Doctor's Association. "If the picture remains as it is, if the authorities do not take any measures, we could have an alarming situation."

According to the National Health Secretariat there have been 351 cases of cholera and four deaths in Brazil.

The first known cholera case in Rio came from the Amazon

basin, carried by a soldier returning home from duty in the jungle where he contracted the disease. He became ill in Rio.

Cholera causes intense diarrhoea, and cramps and can lead to kidney failure, though it is usually not fatal.

The state of Brazil's basic sanitation services — the bulwark against cholera wherever it appears — "is absolutely tragic," said Luiz Otavio Mota Pereira, president of the Association of Sanitary and Environmental Engineers.

About 20 million of Brazil's 144 million people have no access to clean water and 75 million live without proper sewage systems.

Japanese lower house passes U.N. peacekeeping bill

TOKYO (R) — A controversial bill allowing Japanese troops to take part in United Nations peacekeeping operations cleared a major hurdle Tuesday, but the government is racing against time to get it passed this year.

The lower house of parliament voted 311-167 in favour of the measure, with the centrist, Buddhist-backed Komeito joining forces with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

Now the bill goes to the upper house where the LDP lacks a majority and will need Komeito support to push it through.

Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa only has until Dec. 10 to fulfil LDP pledges to enact the bill this year. Parliamentary sources said he could fail and would then have to wait until early 1992 for upper house approval.

The opposition Socialists and Communists have criticised the bill, arguing that to deploy troops abroad would violate the constitutional ban on using force to settle international disputes.

The leftists also vowed to invoke a 1954 upper house resolution which declared that the country's military, called the Self-Defence Forces, would never be deployed abroad.

In the lower house, the Japanese Communist Party and the Socialist Democratic Party of Japan could only delay deliberations on the bill, originally submitted to parliament in September by former Premier Toshiki Kaifu.

Political analysts said Japan's peace camp had been significantly weakened since last year when the opposition forced Mr. Kaifu to scrap a plan to send troops to the Gulf in non-combat role to support U.S.-led forces against Iraq.

Instead, Japan ended up paying \$13 billion towards the allied war effort.

Mr. Kaifu did, however, send naval minesweepers to the Gulf after the war by arguing that it was not a wartime deployment and therefore did not violate any laws.

The lower house Tuesday also passed an amendment which would allow the armed forces to participate in disaster relief abroad.

That vote was 325-153, with another centrist party the Democratic Socialists, joining the LDP and Komeito.

Meanwhile, South Korea, occupied by Japan for 35 years, said it was gravely concerned by the bill.

"We have previously expressed concern about the Japanese move to send armed forces abroad to help the peacekeeping activities of the United Nations," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

"And we can't but be worried as we underwent bitter experiences in the past... we cannot but express our grave concern again as the peacekeeping forces bill was passed today."

The statement reflected worries in South Korea over a possible resurgence of Japanese militarism. China has also voiced its opposition to the use of Japanese troops abroad.

U.S. sets conditions for recognising Soviet republics

WASHINGTON (R) — A U.S. move towards recognising the Ukraine's independence has set standards for dealing with similar drives by other Soviet republics in the future.

It is also a sign that American policy towards the Soviet Union, in disarray following the August coup that briefly toppled Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, is finally gaining focus again.

White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater announced that Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Niles would leave for Kiev immediately for consultations and that Secretary of State James Baker would travel to Kiev and Moscow at the end of the month.

He listed the most important factors the United States will use to determine full U.S. recognition of the Ukraine following the referendum there Sunday in which the people voted overwhelmingly for independence from Moscow's control.

Those factors include control of nuclear weapons on Ukrainian territory, respect for borders and human rights, commitment to a free-market economy and the Ukraine's obligation with regard to the debts of the Soviet Union.

A U.S. official said those same standards can also be used in dealing with the independence drives of other Soviet republics, including the largest one, Russia, which has yet to hold an independence referendum.

"We want to look at them on a case-by-case basis but it does sort of set a standard for the way we might examine them," the official said.

Mr. Bush had tied his policy towards the Soviet Union closely to Mr. Gorbachev and his efforts to the central government now has forced the major policy shift.

"It is clear that power is shifting from the centre to the repub-

lics," said the U.S. official, though quick to add that Mr. Gorbachev was not powerless.

"He's still a figure of power and influence and importance, but it's an evolving situation and we have to examine it carefully," he said.

The timetable for full U.S. recognition of the Ukraine is unclear but looks like involving weeks rather than months.

"The White House stressed it still wanted to cooperate with Mr. Gorbachev and planned to expand contacts with Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

"We are aware that independence raises some complex issues to be resolved among Russia, the Ukraine and the centre (in Moscow)," said Mr. Fitzwater.

"Establishment of a new, cooperative relationship between Russia and Ukraine, based on openness and mutual respect, will be a test of whether they are making the transition to a democratic society," he said.

Mr. Niles said in a U.S. television interview later Monday that the Ukraine's move towards independence appeared to mean that the old Soviet Union was defunct.

Asked whether he agreed with a statement by Mr. Kravchuk that "for all practical purposes this means the Soviet Union no longer exists," Mr. Niles replied: "Well, it would certainly appear to be so, but it's a little premature to write the obituary of the Soviet Union."

"Mr. Niles, the assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs, added that making such a judgment was not his responsibility.

He said he thought Mr. Gorbachev would remain "a figure of some influence, some importance, and we'll just simply have to see what role he'll play in the future."

Washington, Seoul may review scale of war-games

SEOUL (R) — South Korea and the United States could review the scale of their annual "Team Spirit" war games in response to North Korea's suspected development of nuclear weapons, a Foreign Ministry official said Tuesday.

The official was commenting on a report by South Korea's Yonhap News Agency that the allies had agreed to increase the scale of Team Spirit and to deploy weapons used during the Gulf war for the exercise.

"At the moment it's very hard to make any detailed comments," said the official, who declined to be named.

"But I think this (review) is one of the options... that we may take to cope with North Korea's nuclear development programme," he said.

Quoting diplomatic sources, Yonhap said in a report from Washington that advanced weapons used in the Gulf would remain in South Korea after the exercise if North Korea continued to ignore international pressure and develop nuclear arms.

A leading Seoul daily, JoongAng Daily News, quoting a U.S. defence source, said these measures were agreed during the annual military strategy talks in South Korea last month.

South Korean defence officials

were not available for comment.

U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said at the talks that a nuclear-armed North Korea would be "the most serious threat to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in East Asia."

A signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, North Korea is under pressure to sign the follow-up nuclear safeguards agreement, which would allow international inspection of its nuclear facilities.

North Korea strongly denies it is developing nuclear arms, but has refused to accept unconditional inspection of its plant at Yongbyon, 90 kilometres north of Pyongyang.

The United States, Japan and South Korea all say they believe the North is close to acquiring the ability to make nuclear arms.

Within days of Mr. Cheney's comments, Pyongyang said it would sign the nuclear safeguards agreement when the United States began removing its nuclear weapons from the South.

In September, President George Bush announced he was ending deployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons worldwide.

On Nov. 28, Yonhap said the United States had begun to withdraw nuclear weapons and JoongAng Daily News said a considerable number had been removed.

Khmer Rouge to return to Phnom Penh

PATTAYA, Thailand (R) — Khmer Rouge leader Khien Samphan, who was attacked by an angry mob and thrown out of Phnom Penh last week, said Tuesday he intended to return to the Cambodian capital.

"Yes," the small, bespectacled Maoist leader said to reporters who asked him if he would return to the city he helped turn into a ghost town when the Khmer Rouge ran Cambodia in the 1970s.

"Mr. Khien Samphan and his colleagues will return to Phnom Penh in a few days," said Hun Sen, premier of the government which the Khmer Rouge had been trying to oust for 13 years.

Both men spoke to reporters after leaving a four-faction meeting of members of the Supreme National Council (SNC), Cambodia's U.N.-mandated reconciliation body.

The meeting had to be switched to Thailand after a crowd attacked Mr. Khien Samphan within hours of his return to Phnom Penh last Wednesday under a U.N.-sponsored peace plan.

Diplomats who attended the talks said this time the Khmer Rouge would take up residence in the SNC's Phnom Penh headquarters, a solid cement art deco structure surrounded by a thick, high wall.

The headquarters, a former government guest house where visiting heads of state and other senior officials were once housed, will also be home to some U.N. officials, they said.

This would provide the Khmer Rouge with the moral protection of the world body, they said.

Timor shooting is an aberration — Australian envoy

DILI, East Timor (R) — Australia's ambassador to Indonesia arrived in East Timor Tuesday expressing alarm at the army shooting of mourners here three weeks ago.

"Australia was shocked and alarmed at the scale of the event that took place and information that has emerged about the extent of the tragedy that occurred in the province," Philip Flood told reporters on arrival at the airport in the capital, Dili.

"As our minister have explained, we believe the events were an aberration perpetrated by a section of the military."

Some reports say up to 180 people died when soldiers opened fire on mourners at a Dili cemetery on Nov. 12. The military says 19 died.

Indonesia has been internationally condemned for the shooting but Mr. Flood refused to comment when asked if his government was trying to persuade Jakarta to agree to a mission by the United Nations to investigate the shooting.

Jakarta says its own government commission is sufficient.

Mr. Flood, on a five-day visit to the former Portuguese colony which Indonesia annexed in 1976, will meet the local governor, the territory's military commander

and the head of the locally dominant Roman Catholic Church.

He appealed for dialogue rather than demonstrations to relieve tension between the two neighbouring countries, which have seen a wave of protests in Australia and counter-protests in Indonesia over the Nov. 12 violence.

"I believe cool heads are needed in both countries to discuss the issues confronting us," he said.

The official Indonesian News Agency Monday quoted unnamed sources as saying that an Australian charity, Community Action Abroad (CAA), may have masterminded the incident.

CAA, whose interpreter was killed in the shooting, rejected the charge but East Timor military Brigadier-General Rndolf Warouw said he would investigate.

"We will thoroughly study the report," said Warouw, who spent his second day giving testimony to a government commission investigating the shooting.

Indonesia's information minister in Jakarta again criticised foreign journalists who had been in East Timor at the time but travelling as tourists.

Head of the government com-

mission Djaelani, who admitted earlier he was having trouble meeting relatives and witnesses, finally found a woman Tuesday morning searching for her missing son.

"We don't know whether he's still alive. Someone saw him being shot," said Maria Judith of her 20-year-old son Emilio Roberto Neves Rein.

Mrs. Judith, dressed in mourning, told reporters at the hotel where the commission was staying that she had been barred from a military hospital where the injured were being treated.

"I have been trying for 21 days. I have been searching for him at police headquarters and military headquarters."

The name of her son, a high school drop-out, was not among those listed dead.

Jakarta has banned two foreign journalists who witnessed the East Timor shootings from returning to Indonesia, accusing them of misusing their tourist visas.

The official Antara news agency quoted Immigration Director-General Sitap Simuraya as saying Allan Nairn and Amy Goodman would be prevented from returning for about six months, though the period could be extended.

Mr. Nairn, who was working for the New Yorker magazine, said he and Ms. Goodman of New York radio station WBAI were badly beaten by troops. Both gave graphic accounts to the press of what happened.

Meanwhile, five East Timorese independence movement leaders said they were bitterly disappointed by their talks Tuesday with Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke.

They talked to Mr. Hawke for 10 minutes in Parliament House and spent a further two hours with Foreign Minister Gareth Evans but were unable to obtain a change in Australia's good relations policy towards Indonesia, its northern neighbour.

"We were bitterly disappointed by the response of the Australian government," Joao Carrascalao, vice-president of the pro-independence Timorese Democratic Movement, told reporters.

"We expected something new but nothing new emerged," he said.

"Australia's policy of appeasement with Indonesia has done nothing," delegation member Jose Ramos-Horta said.

There was no immediate comment from Mr. Hawke or Mr. Evans on the talks.

COLUMN

Austria's Christmas devil beating 'is out of control'

VIENNA (R) — An Austrian Christmas tradition where men dressed as fur-clad devils beat women and children with branches is getting out of hand, a women's organisation said Monday. Traditional celebrations of the feast of St. Nicholas on Dec. 5 and 6 involve household visits by people dressed as the saint who rewards good children with sweets, and by wooden-masked "krampus" devils who give a lighthearted symbolic "beating" and a lump of coal to naughty ones. But in many villages the festival has turned into an annual rampage by teams of branch-wielding krampuses, anonymous behind grinning, horned masks, who pursue their victims through village streets. "Last year I heard from many women about violent assaults and one woman was really beaten," said Angelika Hoedl, leader of the Initiative Against Violence Towards Women and Children on Krampus Day in the southern province of Carinthia. "This tradition is being used increasingly to carry out drunken, masked assaults. It has little to do with tradition and we think the authorities are doing far too little about it."

Hoedl added that the tradition had ceased to be fun for many children who were terrified of the dancing devils. The women's group plans to operate an emergency telephone help line where krampus victims can get advice and support. "We heard that last year a woman was even raped in one village pub," Hoedl said. "But the whole thing was played down and passed off as harmless fun."

Santa Claus was kicked and called a "mean old bastard" when he ran out of lollies and balloons during a Christmas parade at the weekend in the New Zealand village of Kaikohu. John Field, walking among a crowd of townsfolk dressed as Santa, said children started swearing and kicking him when his stocks of goodwill dried up. Adults also lost their seasonal cheer and became rude and aggressive, asking him if he represented government cutbacks. The New Zealand government has slashed welfare spending in the past year. "Nothing like that happened at last year's parade, but to be called on Saturday a mean old bastard is a serious social indicator and the government ought to take note," Santa added.

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